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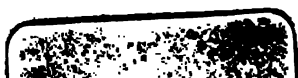
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Johnson

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
THE LIFE AND DEATH
OF
OUR BLESSED SAVIOR

BY
MRS. CATHERINE D'OYI

SOUTHAMPTON:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY T. BAI
SOLD ALSO BY E. LAW AND SON, AVE-M
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ADDRESS FROM THE AUTHOR.

TO THE READER.

THE writer of the following remarks is too sensible of her own deficiencies, both in point of knowledge, style and method, to submit them to public notice without feeling the greatest timidity.

Besides which disadvantages, she has had others to encounter, which arose partly from her inexperience of the slow progress of printing, and partly from her hurry to arrange her remarks into proper order for the press.

Having engaged to the subscribers to publish the work at a short stated period,

it put her under the necessity of sending each chapter to the press as soon as written; by which the work was deprived of the advantage of being revised and corrected all together previous to its publication.

The only plea she has to offer for her presumption is, the motive which caused it; and for which, if she finds credit, she has no doubt of the indulgence of the public. She will therefore briefly state what first induced her to commit her observations to paper, and now encourages her to send them to the press.

Having much leisure, and wishing to employ it as usefully as possible, she some years ago took upon herself the superintendence of one of those private charitable establishments, which have been instituted in various parts of the kingdom, for the increase of religion and encouragement of industry amongst the children of the poor; and that she might perform this voluntary duty so as to make a lasting impression upon the minds of her pupils, she determined

mined attentively to peruse the sacred Scriptures, with the several excellent commentaries, and to intersperse such observations of her own mind as might enable her to fulfil that pleasing duty.

Such being her object, her readers will not, she trusts, be disappointed, should they find the present work rather a selection from the voluminous performances of others, than an original.

To the publications of Poole, Stanhope, Sherlock, and various other learned divines and commentators, she confesses herself indebted for the best part of what she now offers to the public.

These works she would now earnestly recommend to those whose circumstances will enable them to procure such valuable compositions: but as the lower class of people could neither obtain them, nor afford time for such enlarged studies without neglecting the necessary duties of the station in which it has pleased God to place them, it appeared to the author that the present work might prove useful
to

to their uninformed minds, until one more perfect shall be brought forward.

Such was the origin of this performance; and her partial, perhaps too partial friends, have encouraged her to believe that others, particularly amongst the younger part of mankind, and also amongst those who undertake similar employments, may derive some benefit from her labor: as, in the pursuit of knowledge for others, she has acquired some edification herself.

Flattered with the idea of contributing, though in ever so slight a degree, to the increase of religious knowledge amongst her fellow-Christians, she humbly submits the following pages to the candor of the public; trusting, that should they find but little to commend, they will, in consideration of her motive, forbear censure.

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ERRATA.

- Page 54, line 5, *for* begun *read* began.
 54, - 16, *for* scarce *read* scarcely.
 64, - 5, *for* sketch *read* stretch.
 65, - 25, *for* seem *read* seems.
 68, - 5, *after* the word "revelation" *place* a comma.
 124, - 17, *for* his *read* its.
 143, - 16, *after* the word "Saviour" a colon.
 143, - 17, *after* the word "prosperous" a comma.
 161, - 3, *for* Joseph's well *read* Jacob's well.
 165, - 1, *for* hence *read* whence.
 168, - 21, *for* retrace *read* correct.
 202, - 14, leave out the word "not."
 234, - 14, *for* for *read* in.
 267, - 14, *for* expressing their public attachment *read* publicly
 expressing their attachment.
 387, - 13, *for* confirm it *read* confirm her belief.
 393, - 6, *for* power *read* powers.
 547, lines 21, 22, *for* permitted only to befall the righteous *read*
 which by permission alone can befall the righteous.
 625, line 10, *for* the *read* their.
 700, the first nine lines should be a continuation of the quotation
 from Sir Isaac Newton.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

BEFORE we enter upon the subject of our blessed Saviour's birth, it will be necessary, for the better understanding of the subsequent events, to look back to the situation of Adam in the garden of Eden, and to take a view of the earliest times.

No sooner had man sinned, but God, in mercy to him and to his fallen race, who became involved in his guilt, promised a favour: as soon therefore as he was promised, mankind had an interest in this second Adam, (I. Cor. xv. 21. 22.); "For

* The full account of which is to be found in the third chapter of Genesis.

" as

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“ as in Adam all die, even so in Christ
“ shall all be made alive.”

The rapid progress of sin may be worthy of remark, and serve to shew the danger of the first false step ; for we soon after read, that it had attained a height one would have scarcely believed possible.

It is indeed very wonderful that the first man born into the world should have murdered an affectionate brother : at that early period, brotherly affection might have been supposed stronger than in after-ages.

This melancholy history should teach us carefully to guard against the intrusion of envy and jealousy ; as those pernicious passions, if indulged to excess, will totally deprive us of reason : and if at any time they force themselves upon our minds, we should strive to expel such foes to our happiness, convinced that wherever they enter, they will embitter every social enjoyment. There are many kinds of jealousy : that of Cain is a very common and dangerous one. Pride and self-love make us
dissatisfied

dissatisfied with the respect and attention paid to others, if they are preferred to ourselves, though at the same time all the unprejudiced part of the world may see the justness of the preference.

Cain might well be wretched, when he had brought such judgments upon himself; and all who are obliged to fly from home, or, in other words, from themselves, will, like Cain, be wanderers and vagabonds, let their outward prospects or fortunes be ever so great.

There are two circumstances in the history of Cain which many people cavil at. Where, say they, should he meet with a wife? and who was there to revenge the murder of his brother? If we do but reflect how soon a healthy colony is peopled from a very few settlers, our wonder will cease, as Adam was an hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born; which was not long after the murder of Abel. This opinion appears very probable, from Eve's thankfulness to God; who, she said, had
given

given her a son in the room of Abel, whom Cain slew. If this is admitted, Adam might have had, at that time, offspring to the third and fourth generations; and, although the sacred scriptures do not mention them, they imply as much in the account they give of Cain's conduct: besides, we must add twenty years to Adam's life to put him upon a footing with the rest of mankind, his age being counted from the time of his creation, when he was of course at maturity.

In process of time, Seth's posterity, who were called the sons of God because they practised true religion, made marriages with the children of men; that is, with the wicked race of Cain: this seduced them from the church of God, and they became as corrupt in their religion and morals as the rest of mankind.

This fatal error should be a warning to all serious people, how they connect themselves for life. If religion and virtue are overlooked in marriage, what happiness can be expected from the union?

Enoch.

AND DEATH OF

the room of Abel, whom is admitted, Adam might time, offspring to the generations; and, although s do not mention them, in the account they give besides, we must add n's life to put him upon est of mankind, his age the time of his crea-
course at maturity.

Seth's posterity, who of God because they on, made marriages en; that is, with the ; this seduced them od, and they became igion and morals as

ould be a warning to they connect them- eligion and virtue riage, what happi- om the union?

Enoch.

OUR BLESSED SAV

Enoch, whose history fo that it is possible to stand fir the midst of vice and wicked

Noah was a preacher of and moreover a prophet; b at that time was so wicked th not listen to him; they wan had they believed his predict not but suppose they would b ferently. When nothing el vince them, the Almighty def world; but in so merciful gave the inhabitants time to r we not reason, then, to hope, many thousands of happy sc constantly praising and glorif this method which he contin bringing finners to himself mighty could, in an instant, h the world; but mercy eve judgments as far as is confi justice.

Very soon after the flood, build the tower of Babel. not mean it as a security ag

C

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flood ; as they must know that brick and mortar could not protect them against such an inundation. It was Ham's wicked race, headed by Nimrod, who formed this design : they forsook the worship of the true God, and wanted to acquire a glorious name, as they called it, and to establish an universal empire. Rebels too often glory in their crimes : this was a very daring act of impiety against God ; particularly as it was so shortly after his destroying the old world. The Almighty confounded both their language and their pride, at the same time ; and as it is usual with him to bring good out of evil, made that very punishment conducive to the benefit of mankind, by giving them a variety of tongues. It became necessary that they should form themselves into different societies and disperse themselves in the world, so as to inhabit it more equally. Another advantage arose from it, which will be felt as long as the world lasts ; for had all mankind continued to use the same language, the intercourse by speech of the various nations spread over
the

the face of the earth with each other, would have been rendered so easy as to have obviated the necessity of study; by which the human mind has been opened and enlarged, its faculties expanded, and by constant exertion of its powers, rendered capable of, and fitted for the most sublime researches.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot help making a reflection on the above very wonderful transaction. That the descendants of Noah, even during his life-time, and within so short a period of time as a century after such a manifestation of the justice and mercy of the Almighty, should have forsaken their God, is a degree of madness which, bad as the world is now supposed to be, we can scarcely conceive possible, and to which nothing less than the authority of the sacred writings could compel our belief.

The first superior character that strikes our attention after this, is Abraham; whose faith and piety were so great, that he had

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the honor to be styled ‘ the friend of God.’ The genealogy of our blessed Saviour, given in St. Matthew’s gospel, begins with him. The promise made to him, that the Messiah should be born of his posterity, is contained in Genesis, chap. xxii. verse 18. “ In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” This could not have been said in a temporal sense ; for so far from all the nations of the earth being blessed in his seed, the Jews were, in fact, the enemies of all other people : having been selected by the Almighty for the punishment of the idolatrous nations and the preservation of the true religion, and being forbidden by their law to have any intercourse or connection with strangers, they were considered by their neighbours as a proud, insolent people, and were consequently hated and despised by them. The promise, therefore, was evidently of a spiritual nature, and was not fulfilled until the birth of our blessed Saviour ; as appears also from St. Paul’s epistle to the
Romans,

Romans, chap. iv. ver. 13. " For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Again, St. Paul (speaking of the posterity of Abraham) says, " Moreover, brethren, I would not ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, and did eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ." (I. Cor. x. 1. 2. 3. 4.)

Jacob blessing his children, on his death-bed, is also well worth our attention. Had the choice rested with him, there can be no doubt but that the posterity of his beloved Joseph would have enjoyed the honor of giving birth to the Messiah; but from the 8th to the 13th verse of the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, Jacob, by divine inspiration, fixes it to the tribe of Judah; which

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which was kept totally distinct from all the other tribes.

That Ruth, whose history is so beautifully related in the old testament, was admitted into this tribe, seems to have been intended to point out, that the Gentiles were to partake of the honor and blessings of our beloved Saviour, in his human as well as his divine nature, (Ruth, chap. i. verse 16.) “ And Ruth said, intreat me not
“ to leave thee, or to return from following
“ after thee, for whither thou goest I will
“ go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge :
“ thy people shall be my people, and thy
“ God, my God.”

Ruth was great-grand-mother to king David, who was a type of Christ, and to whose house and lineage he was promised. The circumstance also of her having been honored with a separate book, by the inspired historian, seems to prove that there was much intended under her pleasing history. How often are the most wonderful counsels of the Almighty brought about by the most easy and natural means ; even
when

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kept totally distinct from all
others.

whose history is so beautiful in the old testament, was admitted into this tribe, seems to have been pointed out, that the Gentiles might see the honor and blessings of our Saviour, in his human and divine nature, (Ruth, chap. i. and Ruth said, intreat me not to return from following thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: all be my people, and thy God.

Great-grand-mother to king David, a type of Christ, and to his lineage he was promised. The story also of her having been mentioned in a separate book, by the inspired writers, seems to prove that there are the most wonderful things wrought about by the Holy Spirit, and not by natural means; even when

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

when the persons concerned were totally unconscious of the great work he had in hand! Great part of the old testament is a continued prophecy of our blessed Saviour, and the New Testament is all very explicit upon this

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

HAVING in the foregoing chapter briefly touched on such parts of old testament as I conceived necessary my design, I shall now proceed to observe on the principal events in the life of most gracious Redeemer ; and after citing two or three chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke, because they take the history from an earlier period, I follow the gospel recorded by St. John only occasionally commenting on some particulars contained in the other gospels not inserted in that of St. John.

In pursuance of this plan, I shall begin with the first chapter of St. Matthew, v the 18th.

ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. I.

“ 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was
“ on this wise. When as his mother Mary
“ was espoused to Joseph, before they
“ came together, she was found with child
“ of the Holy Ghost.

“ 19. Then Joseph, her husband, being
“ a just man, and not willing to make her
“ a public example, was minded to put her
“ away privily.

“ 20. But while he thought on these
“ things, behold the angel of the Lord ap-
“ peared unto him in a dream, saying, Jo-
“ seph, thou son of David, fear not to take
“ unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which
“ is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

“ 21. And she shall bring forth a son,
“ and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for
“ he shall save his people from their sins.

“ 22. Now all this was done, that it
“ might be fulfilled which was spoken of

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“ the Lord by the prophet,” (Isaiah, chap. vii. ver. 1.) “ saying,

“ 23. Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us.

“ 24. Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife ;

“ 25. And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son : and he called his name Jesus.”

In those times, God was pleased frequently to reveal his will by dreams and visions. Joseph did not, like modern infidels, disbelieve the divine mystery because it was above his comprehension : it was sufficient for him that God had revealed it. May the Almighty grant us all grace to follow his bright example, in the perfect assurance that, altho' we now see through a glass, darkly, all things will be cleared up to us when we arrive at the place of
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prophet," (Isaiah, chap. 7, v. 14,)

a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel; which is, God with us.

Joseph being raised from the angel of the Lord, and took unto him his

her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name Jesus."

God was pleased freely to reveal his will by dreams and visions, not, like modern infidelity, a divine mystery because of human comprehension: it was not till God had revealed his will that he granted us all grace and mercy. In the perfect example, in the perfect life of Jesus, we now see through the veil of mystery. All things will be cleared up, and the place of the

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

the blessed! then will our minds be enlarged to understand the mystery of the divine religion.

Unbelief is but too much the characteristic of the present age. Pride, and the want of thorough knowledge of the scriptures, are generally the causes of it. Ministers of mercy preserve us from this, and cause us to peruse the revelations of his will which he has condescended to reveal to us, with humility and reverence. We beg God's assistance, he will, enable us to see clearly every thing necessary for our salvation; for he "sifteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

What is said of Joseph, that "a just man," &c. leads me to observe, that good people commonly are too ready to do injury. The wicked are generally of pushing the law to its utmost limit, but the pious, benevolent minister of the law, with a tear of tender compassion over the sufferings of human nature, is obliged by the law to punish the

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he proceeds with the utmost tenderness and compassion ; knowing that he himself must one day appear before the Judge of the whole world, and that, if he refuses mercy to his fellow-creature, he cannot expect mercy at that awful tribunal himself. May we all make an interest in the favor of this Judge, while time and opportunities are afforded us ! Be our situation ever so difficult, we shall be more than conquerors, if, instead of trusting to our own strength, we implore protection and assistance, where we are assured that the truly pious and humble Christian never sues in vain.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

ST. LUKE, CHAP. II.

" 1. **A**ND it came to pass in those days,
" that there went out a decree
" from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world
" should be taxed.

" 2. (And this taxing was first made
" when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

" 3. And all went to be taxed, every
" one into his own city.

" 4. And Joseph also went up from
" Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth,
" into Judea, unto the city of David, which
" is called Bethlehem ; (because he was of
" the house and lineage of David ;)

" 5. To be taxed, with Mary, his ef-
" poused wife, being great with child.

" 6. And

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“ 6. And so it was, that while ~~they~~
“ were there, the days were accomplishe ~~d~~
“ that she should be delivered.

“ 7. And she brought forth her first-
“ born son, and wrapped him in swaddling
“ clothes, and laid him in a manger, because
“ there was no room for him in the inn.”

Many things worthy of notice are contained in the foregoing verses.

The Almighty, who disposes of all events and directs the councils of kings, to effect the purposes of his wisdom and goodness, seems to have ordained this act of the government of Augustus Cæsar, (under whose authority the Jewish people then were) to take place at this particular time and in the manner pointed out in the third verse, for two purposes: first, that the prophecy of Micah, chap. v. ver. 2. that our blessed Saviour was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, might be fulfilled; and, secondly, that by means of the great concourse of people necessarily assembled upon this occasion, his birth might be
made

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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Micah, chap. v. ver. 2.
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might be fulfilled:
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made much more public than it
could have been; as the won-
cumstances which attended it
been known to all who were
the time, who would naturally re-
in the different parts of the co-
their return home.

So great indeed was the mul-
thered together upon this oc-
Bethlehem, that the blessed Vir-
procure no better accommodati-
stable, nor the divine babe than
This is one among the very many
we constantly meet with in the
our Saviour, that whatever was
to the salvation of mankind, was
preferred to any of the comfort-
veniences of this world.

And here, let us not overlook
ing lesson given us of condescen-
humility: when we see the Son
the creator of the world, not dis-
take up his residence in a stable
furd must it make all the pomp
deur of this world appear! and

weak man, after this be proud of the accidental advantages of riches and show. I he must be proud, let it be at the care and attention with which the Almighty still regards his fallen and sinful race, making every different situation in life subservient to our everlasting happiness, if we do not counteract his goodness by our own obstinacy.

“ 8. And there were, in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock, by night.

“ 9. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them ; and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : and they were fore afraid.”

Though our blessed Saviour had a manger for his cradle, yet nothing could be more grand than the manner in which his birth was made known : the heavenly hosts were sent to proclaim it. They were not sent to kings, princes, or to the rulers of the earth, but to simple shepherds. Their
narration

narration could not be suspected of art, which might have been the case had the glad tidings been made known through the great or the learned.

And here it may be necessary to observe, that the occupation of a shepherd, amongst the Jews, had, many centuries before, been considered amongst the first employments, and that some of their greatest and wisest characters had exercised it; but, at the time of our Saviour, it was no longer so, but as in our own, and other countries, was confined to the lower orders of men; and from the nature of their employment they were generally considered as ignorant, simple, harmless people.

“ 10. And the angel said unto them,
“ fear not; for behold I bring you good
“ tidings of great joy which shall be to all
“ people.

“ 11. For unto you is born this day, in
“ the city of David, a Saviour, which is
“ Christ the Lord.

“ 12. And this shall be a sign unto you :

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“ ye

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“ ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

“ 13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

“ 14. Glory to God in the highest ; and, on earth, peace ; goodwill towards men.”

The nativity of our blessed Saviour was first published by one angel, but a multitude of the heavenly host joined in the celebration of it : they declared that this blessing was to be universal ; not confined to any nation or people, but was intended for all people, and for every different nation upon earth. Well, therefore, may “ all the dear-bought nations sing, rejoice and give thanks.”

The shepherds immediately set out, tho' it was night, to see their new-born king and saviour. They found him in the humble situation which the angels had described ; and they, rejoicing, proclaimed his birth.

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In the following verses, we are told that their relation of these transactions excited wonder in all who heard them ; but that Mary preserved the remembrance of them and pondered them in her heart ; and that the shepherds returned home, praising and glorifying God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Any occurrence out of the common course of nature will produce wonder : but to make our admiration useful to ourselves, we must, like the shepherds, believe and be thankful ; and, like Mary, ponder in our hearts on what we believe ; since we are all equally concerned in this mysterious transaction.

Would we derive from the holy Scriptures all the benefit they are meant to convey to us, we should consider every good or praise-worthy action which is recorded in them, as an example to ourselves, and to all future ages. In this light I regard the conduct of the shepherds ; who, highly honored as they had

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been above the kings and learned men of the earth, by having conversed with angels and being chosen as the publishers of the birth of our blessed Saviour, were not therefore puffed up with pride or conceit, but returned joyfully to their former humble employment. Such let our conduct be. If we are blessed with any particular favors of Providence, either temporal or spiritual, let it only teach us gratitude to our Maker, and kindness to our fellow-creatures.

“ 21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus; which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”

The Jewish law was of divine institution; it was a representation of what our blessed Saviour was to do and suffer for us: it was imperfectly practised by the Jews till he came; when he in his own person having fulfilled the whole law, established

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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much superior to the Jewish, as
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The Jewish religion was evidently
of preparation for the Christian; o
all its ceremonies were types and fl
Thus their sacrifices were admira
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necessity of the death of the sinne
some one in his stead ; and wou
rally lead the Jews, who could r
pose that the blood of bulls and c
could of itself take away sin, to
the promised saviour, through
whom alone they could produce
fect.

By his sacrifice of himself, once
for the sins of the whole world,
Jewish types being changed into
they were of course abolished,

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more perfect system of the gospel covenant established.

“ 25. And behold there was a man in
“ Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and
“ the same man was just and devout, waiting
“ for the consolation of Israel ; and
“ the Holy Ghost was upon him.

“ 26. And it was revealed unto him, by
“ the Holy Ghost, that he should not see
“ death before he had seen the Lord Christ

“ 27. And he came by the Spirit into
“ the Temple ; and when the parents
“ brought in the child Jesus, to do for
“ him after the custom of the law,

“ 28. Then took he him up in his
“ arms, and blessed God, and said :

“ 29. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant
“ depart in peace, according to thy word

“ 30. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

The same holy spirit promises us likewise, that we shall see him : not indeed
with

with bodily eyes as Simeon did, but with the eye of faith ; if, like him, we will perform the conditions upon which that promise was made.

We see also in Anna, the prophetess, as related in some following verses of the same chapter, the great encouragement given to perseverance. She, like Simeon, was informed of the real and true appearance of the saviour of the world in that blessed babe.

Every wilful neglect of public worship is very dangerous ; as something requisite to us to learn, or applicable to our own situation, may be lost by our absence. Stanhope, in a discourse on St. Thomas's-day, attributes the disbelief of that apostle to his not being with his brethren when Jesus appeared ; and makes these pertinent remarks on the subject. " When sloth, or " contempt, or a light disposition, or a " pretence of business, tempts you to be " absent, think with yourself, it may be, " God this day may by his minister tell " me some necessary thing which I knew
not

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“not before. It may be, he may drive
 “some powerful exhortation home upon
 “my conscience, which may make me a
 “better man ever after: some lurking sin
 “may be discovered; or some domineer-
 “ing lust subdued. My zeal, my devo-
 “tion, my charity, may be inflamed, by
 “joining in prayer with my fellow-chris-
 “tians. But why do I say, *it may be!*
 “for some of these certainly will be.
 “God hath commanded his blessing to
 “wait at his own house: and no man
 “ever came thither as he ought, but he
 “went back better than he came.”

So far Stanhope. Let me add, that to
 slight or neglect so great a privilege when
 offered to us, as that of being admitted
 into the presence of our Maker and of
 applying to him for whatever we stand in
 need of, with a promise that he will grant
 our petitions as far as they are conducive
 to our real good, may naturally be sup-
 posed to offend him. Though so greatly
 indulgent to us, he has declared himself
 a jealous God who will not suffer his
 kind

kind offers to be rejected with impunity : surely, at least, we run the risk of his withdrawing from us the assistance of his holy spirit, without which all our endeavors to please him cannot but fail, when we wilfully neglect the means he has pointed out to preserve so great a blessing.

Although true humility is one of the first and most distinguishing marks of a Christian, yet I cannot help thinking that those who attempt, under that pretence, to debase human nature, are its worst enemies. Of this description are those who by their writings have endeavored to represent it in the blackest and most frightful colors, which, instead of holding out an encouragement to virtue, is apt to depress the mind of the pious and humble Christian ; whereas, when we reflect upon the honor that the Son of God has done our nature, we ought to do every thing in our power to honor it. Are we not expressly told, in the sacred writings, that, at the day of judgment, we shall see God and man united in the same person, and

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that

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that angels and archangels will fall **down** and worship him?

Surely this ought to be a motive with us, to endeavor to adorn with every grace and virtue a nature so honored.

The sacred history passes over several years of our blessed Saviour's life; and this chapter concludes with an account of a journey made by Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, to celebrate the passover, and of their taking our Lord with them when he was only twelve years of age; of his tarrying behind them among the doctors in the Temple; and of his return with them to Nazareth, where he continued subject to them.

In the conduct of Joseph and Mary we have an example set us which ought to be followed by all good parents: that of making their children partakers with them, as early as possible, in their religious duties; for whatever care and attention they may pay to their offspring in other matters, if this most essential point be neglected, they are guilty of a great breach of duty, both
to

to themselves and their children. Youth is the season in which the strongest and most lasting impressions are made: it is therefore of the utmost consequence, during that period, to make them sensible of their duty to their Maker; nor can there, in my opinion, be a more delightful sight than that of a well-instructed child joining with its innocent voice in the praises of its Creator: it is a sight that must be pleasing to men and angels.

It always appeared to me possible, and experience has convinced me of it, that we may give children instruction in such a manner as to make it a pleasure to them instead of a task; and that such a mode, if practicable, is to be preferred, more especially in religious matters, will not, I think, be denied.

We should be very cautious not to give children a disgust to their duty, by making it too burthen some or severe, lest, as I am afraid is too often the case, it should grow up with them and settle into habit. We should first gain their hearts, and then

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endeavor to convince their reason, **en-**couraging a laudable curiosity ; **which**, under proper restraints, may be **turned** both to the amusement and improvement of youth.

In our Saviour's example, we may see the reverence and dutiful submission we owe to our parents. There is no case in which we are exempted from this duty, except where it unfortunately happens that the will of the parent is set in **opposition** to still higher duties ; namely, those to our Maker : and, even in this case, although we are bound to obey God rather than our earthly parents, we should so soften our refusal to comply with their desires, by modesty and humility, as to convince them that nothing less than our eternal interest should interfere with our duty to them. Such a conduct, which is conformable to what both the laws of God and man require of us, may probably produce the happiest effects, by shewing our parents the impropriety of their expectations, and inducing them to give them
up,

up, without our appearing to assume a superiority, which is always improper.

The joy which must have filled the breast of the blessed Virgin on finding Jesus, may be more easily conceived than described ; for though she knew him to be the Son of God, yet, during the time that she missed him, human nature prevailed, and distracted her with all the doubts and apprehensions natural to a mother for the safety of a beloved child.

It must have also been a great additional gratification to her to have found him so worthily employed, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and astonishing all that heard him at his understanding. To the remembrance of his mother, our Saviour makes no other reply than, that when higher duties call, earthly ones must give place ; and then, with the utmost respect and meekness, returns with her and his reputed father to Nazareth.

Those who fancy themselves above their parents from any superior acquisition of knowledge or fortune, would do well to look to this example set them by their
God

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God and Saviour, lest it rise up in judgment against them, should they neglect ~~so~~ positive a duty.

Our blessed Saviour, with his human nature, took all its infirmities, sin only excepted: therefore in that nature (as we are told in the 52d verse) he increased in wisdom as he did in stature, and in favor with God and man.

The sacred history is silent for the next eighteen years of our beloved Lord's life, and commences again at his baptism.

I shall beg leave to conclude my observations on this chapter with a few lines from 'Hervey's Starry Heavens,' as being more to the purpose of expressing the wonderful goodness of our God, than any thing I could say upon this divine subject.

" How amazing, how charming, is that
" divine benignity which is pleased to be-
" flow its sacred regards to so foolish and
" worthless a creature, yet disdaining not
" from the height of infinite exaltation to
" extend its kind providential care to our
" most minute concerns! This is amazing!
" but

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR. 41

"but that the everlasting Sovereign should
"give himself to be made flesh, and be-
"come our Saviour, shall I call it a mi-
"racle of condescending goodness? rather
"what are all miracles—what are all my-
"steries to this !"

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THAT I may omit no event which has any relation to the miraculous birth of our blessed Saviour, I must now call your attention to a circumstance of very peculiar nature, and well worth observation ; which we shall find recorded in the second chapter of St. Matthew.

ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. II.

“ 1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him.”

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The wise men here described were persons whose lives had been devoted to study, and who made it their employment to enquire, and diligently to search into, the hidden things of nature, particularly into the motions and dispositions of the heavenly bodies; a study of all others the most likely to raise our notions of that great Being, who not only created, but constantly keeps in order that wonderful system. The veneration and profound respect in which these wise men were held, appear from the important matters entrusted to their management: they were the counsellors, the judges, the priests, the rulers; in a word, the oracles of the eastern countries.

Their going to Jerusalem with full assurance that the Jewish priests could inform them of the place of the Messiah's birth, might probably be owing to a tradition spread by the Jews, at the time of their several captivities, of his expected advent; and thus (as in almost every instance the Almighty made their punish-

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ment for idolatry the means of promoting his own wise purpose) was held out the expectation of a saviour to the surrounding nations. Besides, we may naturally suppose that the famous prophecy of Balaam, when sent for by Balak to curse the Israelites, was kept with great care amongst the Gentiles, in expectation of its accomplishment.

“ I shall see him, but not now : I shall
 “ behold him, but not nigh : there shall
 “ come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre
 “ shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite
 “ the corners of Moab, and destroy all the
 “ children of Sheth. And Edom shall
 “ be a possession ; Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall
 “ do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come
 “ he that shall have dominion, and shall
 “ destroy him that remaineth in the city.”
 —(Numb. xxiv. 17. 18. 19.)

When, therefore, the star appeared, the posterity of Jacob were the only people to whom the wise men could apply for the information they wanted. The last
 verse

AND DEATH OF

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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common event.

Our blessed Saviour was also
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on earth: to fishermen he manif
power, by giving them a w
draught of fishes; to those spe
hunger and fatigue, by feeding t
miraculous manner; to sailors,
manding a calm in the midst of
to the sick, lame, and blind, by
of health, strength, and sight. E
bles, in like manner, were drav
the common occurrences of life;
the sower, the good seed and t
the vineyard, the pruning of t
the shepherd and his sheep.

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For these hints I am chiefly indebted to Stanhope, who treats the subject at length in his comment on the Epiphany.

Let us now return to St. Matthew.

“ 3. When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

“ 4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them what time the Christ should be born.

“ 5. And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea : for thus it is written by the prophet :

“ 6. And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least amongst the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.

“ 7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

“ 8.

“ 8. And he sent them to Bethlehem,
 “ and said, go and search diligently for the
 “ young child : and when ye have found
 “ him, bring me word again, that I may
 “ come and worship him also.”

Before we proceed with this relation, let us pause a little, to consider the conduct of Herod, as recorded in the foregoing verses. It appears evidently that he had some knowledge of the prophecies, and in consequence expected, with the generality of the Jewish people, the appearance of some extraordinary character about that time.

The account given him by the wise men, that a star had pointed out to them his birth, (as he supposed the prophecies to relate to a temporal prince who should deprive him of his kingdom,) greatly alarmed him, and all those who were connected with him, or held offices under him ; for so I understand the expression that all Jerusalem was troubled with him

at

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at the news. He therefore determined by artifice to avail himself of the opportunity offered him, by the search of the wise men, to discover his dreaded rival; and having learnt from the chief priests and scribes, who had the care of the sacred books, and whose business it was to propound the prophecies, that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, he directed the wise men thither; and, concealing the blackest designs under the pretence of religious zeal, desired them to bring him word when they had found the child. But before he dismissed them, he took care to learn from them the precise time that the star appeared, and of consequence the exact age of the child, with a view, no doubt, to the subsequent murder, in case he could succeed by no other means.

“ 9. When they had heard the king,
“ they departed : and lo, the star which
“ they saw in the East went before them
“ till it came and stood over where the
“ young child was.

“ 10. When

" 10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

" 11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts : gold and frankincense and myrrh."

Compare the foregoing passage with the prophecy contained in the 10th and 11th verses of the seventy-second Psalm :

" The kings of Tarshish, and of the isles shall bring presents : the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts : all kings shall fall down before him : all nations shall do him service."

" 12. And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

Let

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Let the conduct of the wise men, on this occasion, be a lesson to us, to obey the commands of God rather than those of men. We are too apt to excuse ourselves from the performance of our duty, when it does not exactly suit our wishes, or our interests, under the plea that it would give displeasure to some great person, or disoblige some friend; and that therefore if we omit it, the fault does not rest on us whose inclination would have led us to do right, had not the fear of giving offence prevented us. This may satisfy ourselves, but is too shallow an evasion to impose even upon the world: how much less on that Being who knows the secrets of all hearts! It can only prove, that we prefer the interests of this world to those of the next, and are more afraid of offending man than God. To the world, therefore, we must look for our reward.

“ 13. And when they were departed,
 “ behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth
 “ to

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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they were departed,
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" to Joseph in a dream, saying, /
" take the young child and his
" and flee into Egypt, and be th
" until I bring thee word : for H
" seek the young child to destroy

The poor and humble situation
seph and Mary, might have made
venient for them to have taken
and unexpected a journey with
assistance. The Almighty remo
difficulty by natural means, in
presented to them by the wise me

The custom of presenting gi
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East to this day, and is confide
mark of respect and reverence.

What an exaltation to the Gen
these wise men should thus publ
and adore the saviour of the we
be made the happy instrument
porting him in his exile !

" 14. When he arose, he
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“ young child and his mother by night,
“ and departed into Egypt;

“ 15. And was there until the death of
“ Herod : that it might be fulfilled which
“ was spoken of the Lord by the pro-
“ phet, saying, out of Egypt have I called
“ my son.

“ 16. Then Herod, when he saw that
“ he was mocked of the wise men, was
“ exceeding wroth, and sent forth and
“ slew all the children that were in Beth-
“ lehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from
“ two years old and under, according to
“ the time which he had diligently en-
“ quired of the wise men.”

It is not possible to read the above account of the desperate pitch of wickedness to which Herod had now attained, without feeling the utmost horror. This ought to be a warning to us all, to avoid the first step in the path of vice. No man ever became extremely vicious, any more than virtuous, at once. Bad habits, as
well

well as good ones, are formed by practice, and gain additional strength by every repetition. Herod must have long indulged himself in the passions of anger and cruelty, dreadful in all persons, but more so in princes, whose power extending in many countries even to life and death, enables them to commit the greatest mischiefs. Our passions should be carefully governed, from the earliest infancy; nor can parents do a greater injury to their children than, from an absurd fondness, to indulge them in their ill-humors and struggles for superiority; but more than all in acts of cruelty, which children practise at first from want of thought, but which as they grow up change into evil habits and harden the mind against all the best feelings of humanity. I would particularly warn parents against suffering their children to engage in those sports which consist in tormenting some animals, and depriving others of their young; which, however common, and therefore unattended to, have, I am persuaded, often

been the cause, in more advanced life, of cruelties to their own species.

We are assured that the greatest monster who ever governed the Roman empire begun his cruelties in infancy, in the torture and destruction of harmless flies. Passionate people must necessarily often commit acts of injustice ; for when we lose the guidance of reason, on what can we depend ?

The absurdity discoverable in the conduct of Herod is no less striking than the wickedness of it, and may serve to shew us what a weak, senseless being man is, when left to the guidance of his passions. We can scarce conceive any rational mind so totally buried in darkness and error. The Messiah was promised as soon as man had sinned, and the promise had been confirmed, in a very particular manner, to the Jews, on the first establishment of their religion : all men in that part of the world, as I have before observed, were in daily expectation of him, to which was owing the number of pretenders to that high

high dignity, as related in the fifth chapter of Acts, verses 36 and 37.

From the character of Herod, we have reason to believe that, had he understood the true nature of the expected saviour, he would have been extremely indifferent about him, nor have been guilty of the dreadful cruelties which his jealousy of power occasioned: but though he mistook the nature of the prophecies, it is evident he believed in the truth of them: all his actions point this out: yet was he so absurd as to suppose the Almighty would permit him to overthrow his fixed determinations, confirmed by solemn and repeated promises.

This union of vice and absurdity, which we have noticed in Herod, is generally to be observed in the conduct of the ungodly. Wilful ignorance is the parent of vice, as well as of superstition. God does not expect from us blind obedience, but a rational service: he has given us reason as a guide, which we are bound to improve by every means in our power, which
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tho' in itself insufficient, yet when aided and informed by revelation, will be a sufficient guide. It will therefore be no excuse for us to plead ignorance for a failure in duty, if we have buried the talent intrusted to us in a napkin. It is on this willful ignorance that the grand foe of mankind grounds one of his most fatal attacks.

“ 17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

“ 18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

It is scarcely necessary to point out to you how exactly this prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, in the transaction we are now considering; but it may not amiss to observe to you in this place, that many of the prophecies have a double object, and allude not only to the time

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If insufficient, yet when aided by revelation, will be a sufficient excuse; there will therefore be no excuse for ignorance for a failure in care; we have buried the talent under a napkin. It is on this wise that the grand foe of mankind has produced his most fatal attacks.

Then was fulfilled that which was foretold by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

Rama was there a voice heard, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

It is very necessary to point out to you exactly this prophecy of Jeremy fulfilled, in the transaction we are now considering; but it may not be necessary to you in this place, that I should say these prophecies have a double fulfilment, not only to the times when

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

when delivered, but also to future times, as in the instance now before us. The prophet seems to have had in view not only the atrocious murders committed by Herod, but also the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan, which have produced similar distresses.

Rachael is not to be understood as alluding to any private individual, but to the general mother of the two tribes, in one, who were involved in the same calamity, she being the mother of Judah and Benjamin; and the distresses of the Jews are a lively and affecting picture of the sufferings of a parent under such circumstances.

Herod was not the less culpable in this tragedy had been foretold to him, he was not compelled to perform it, but was infligated to it by pride, envy, and every hateful passion which is in human nature; these had taken possession of him, and have caused him to be held up as a monster of barbarity.

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only to the age in which he lived, but to all succeeding ages.

“ 19. But when Herod was dead, behold the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and come into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

“ 21. And he arose and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel.

“ 22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee :

“ 23. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Poole

Poole says, "If we may believe historians, a few months after this barbarous transaction, Herod's life and his cruelties terminated in a wretched and deplorable death; and that he at that awful period was made a dreadful example of divine justice." When he was dead, Joseph was ordered by the Almighty to return with Mary and the young child to their own country; but when he found that Archelaus, who was of his father's cruel disposition, was his successor, Joseph, by divine permission, went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; which fulfilled the prophecy that the Saviour of the world should be called a Nazarene, as the last verse of this chapter informs us.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

HAVING now observed upon those parts of the several Gospels which seemed to me necessary, as prefatory to my general design, I shall proceed to the object with which I originally set out—namely, the consideration of the Gospel as recorded by St. John, chapter the first.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. I.

“ 1. In the beginning was the word, and
“ the word was with God, and the word
“ was God.

“ 2. The same was in the beginning
“ with God :

“ 3. All

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IN THE SIXTH.

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h God, and the word
was in the beginning

"3. All

"3. All things were made by him
"without him was not any thing
"that was made.

"4. In him was life, and the
"the light of men."

Here we see that God the Son is
tirely, though in a mysterious
which we cannot understand, unit
God the Father (and we are informed
other parts of scriptures the same
Holy Ghost) that we are led to pay
reverence to one as to the other.

St. John could not possibly have
stronger expressions to prove the
of Jesus Christ, than those with which
introduces his gospel; but indeed
whole tenor of scripture tends to in
this doctrine.

That they who profess Christ
mean who upon reflection have
the religion of Jesus Christ, should
his divinity, appears to me a contradiction
in terms. I would ask, upon
then, is their faith founded? If

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swered, upon the scriptures; do not ~~the~~ scriptures expressly declare him "the Son of God?" Does he not when questioned declare himself to be so? Does he not say, "before Abraham was, I am;" and again, "Ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Shall we then profess our belief in him as the Author of our salvation, and yet doubt his veracity in the most material points? For if we can suppose him to have been capable of deceiving us, in the most trifling particular, how can we rely upon him in those on which our eternal happiness depends. That he admitted of worship, allowed to be due only to the Deity, the holy scriptures give us many instances; whereas his disciples, and all his followers, shrunk from it with the utmost abhorrence; nay, the angel is represented in the Revelation by St. John as equally discouraging such profanation of divine honors, (chap. xix. 10.)

"And I fell at his feet to worship him,
"and

"and he said unto me, see thou do it not,
"I am thy fellow-servant," &c.

How any one who pretends to Christianity, and has attentively considered the history of the life and death of Jesus Christ, can doubt his divinity, is to me unaccountable. In my opinion, we have but one alternative: either he is, as he declares *himself* to be, the Son of God, existing from all eternity, or our dependence upon him for salvation is vain; for if we have been deceived in one case, we may be equally so in the other.

Our doubts on this article have their origin in an absurd pride, which will not admit the belief of any matter our reason cannot comprehend. I am ready to allow, that the mystery of our redemption is in its nature so wonderful, as infinitely to exceed our powers of conception. That the Son of God should voluntarily quit his state of perfect happiness, take upon himself our nature, and submit to all the hardships of it in the lowest station of life, and at last give himself up to a
most

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most painful and ignominious death, to save an ungrateful race who were rebels to his authority, and themselves the actors in all the cruelties inflicted upon him, is a sketch of love so much beyond our best feelings, that we may naturally consider it with amazement; but need we therefore disbelieve it? ought we not rather to break forth in rapturous praises, and exclaim in the words of our great poet—

“——— Oh, unexampled love!

“ Love no where to be found less than divine.

“ Hail, Son of God! Saviour of Men!

“ Thy name shall be the copious matter of my song,
henceforth;

“ And never shall my harp forget thy praise,

“ Nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.”

MILTON, vol. 1. book III.

If we are to believe only what we can comprehend, how are our souls so united to our bodies that they have a mutual operation upon each other, and yet form but one person? The most intelligent man would be puzzled to explain this: but shall we therefore give up our rank in
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the creation, and degrade ourselves to the condition of brutes?

God declares that he is a jealous God, and that he will not suffer worship or adoration to be paid to any thing in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth: no created being is to receive such honors. Had our Saviour, therefore, been any other than the only begotten Son of God, could worship and adoration be paid him, consistently with the law of God? Yet David, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, says of the Messiah, (Psalm xciii. ver. 2.) "Thy throne, O God, is established of old: thou art from everlasting;" and, (Psalm ii. ver. 7.) "I will preach the law whereof the Lord has said unto me: thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, in the first chapter, is still more explicit. I would recommend to such of my readers as may have any doubts on this subject, an attentive perusal of this chapter, which seem to have been written purposely

purposely to remove such doubts. In the sake of brevity, I shall confine myself to the second and sixth verses. In the former, we learn that "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world;" and, in the sixth verse, "again, when he bringeth in the first-born gotten into the world, he saith, and all the angels of God worship him."

To all these forcible considerations cannot help adding one, which may make a great impression upon some people: when hereafter we shall be in the presence of the Author of all our happiness, and remember what he suffered to purchase for us, it will be impossible not to pay the truest worship; and God will never we may hope, impose upon his creature a prohibition of what the best feeling of their nature will dictate.

Let us, then, resign ourselves entirely to God, who will, in his own good time, satisfy us on all those points at present hid

hidden from us, nor expect in this world the knowledge reserved for us in another. How delightful it is to a pious and inquisitive mind, to contemplate on an eternity, employed in the constant acquisition of wisdom ! We shall then have a more perfect knowledge of our God than even our first parents had in their state of innocence.

When we consider how sin has darkened our understandings, shall we proudly contend with the Almighty, and reject those mercies and blessings he offers us, because they are so great as to exceed our comprehension ! We are all ready enough to exert ourselves, nay, even to risk our lives, in the support of our worldly interests : let us not, then, tamely suffer ourselves to be deprived of those glorious advantages offered us under the characters of the adopted sons of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, by a senseless idea of the all-sufficiency of human reason ! let us hold fast our faith in Him, who is able and willing to save us ; let us, in all situations of life, endeavor to prove ourselves

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his true and faithful servants, nor suffer any trials or difficulties, much less be led by the vain arguments of those who would set up their own reason as an unerring guide, in opposition to revelation to induce us to sacrifice that character of our Lord, without which all our most valuable privileges would fall to the ground.

“ 5. And the light shined in darkness —
 “ and the darkness comprehended it not —

The Jews were under the peculiar care of the Almighty, and styled his own people: they were intrusted with the divine law from God himself: this law was type or shadow of good things to come. The ceremonial part was a representation of what our blessed Saviour was to suffer, to redeem lost mankind; but, in process of time, those blessings which were intended to make the Jews more virtuous and humble than the rest of mankind, had a contrary effect, and they became noted for their pride and hypocrisy. They trusted
 more

more to the outward ceremonial than to the spiritual part of their religion ; therefore, when the substance was come, they refused to give up the types and shadows. They expected that their Messiah should have been a powerful sovereign, and that their government, instead of continuing under the yoke of the Romans, should become the first of empires. Under this delusion, when the true Messiah came, clothed in meekness, without any worldly pomp or grandeur, they rejected him, although he offered to release them from a far greater bondage than that of the Romans. With such prepossessions, it is not surprizing that "the light shined in darkness, and the "darkness comprehended it not."

The blindness of the Jews to the scriptures which were intrusted to their care, and all the punishments they have drawn down on themselves for their want of proper attention to them, may furnish us with a good lesson.

To be inattentive to so great a blessing as is bestowed upon us in the holy writings,

ings, is an affront to God, by whose Spirit they were dictated. When we read them we should always bear in mind that they are the works of God, and not of men, and consequently demand our utmost reverence, together with a pious desire to make ourselves acquainted with them.

Should we, therefore, presume to treat the inspired writers with indifference or contempt, the insult is not to them, but to God himself. Allow me to explain this by a familiar instance: a composer of a work may employ a copyist, but the merits or demerits of the work are not attributed to him, but to the author himself.

This consideration leads me naturally to the treatment we ought to observe those who are appointed to watch over us as our spiritual pastors. Disrespect to the clergy, which I am afraid is too frequent amongst us, can be considered in no other light than as an affront to God, whose servants they are. We are ready enough to pay attention to those who are serviceable to us in our temporal affairs

affairs; and are not the pious endeavors of those who teach us the way to everlasting bliss, to be held in equal estimation? If any great man's servant is ill treated, the master generally looks upon the affront as offered to himself, and resents it accordingly: can we then suppose that the Almighty will permit those whose lives are spent in his service to be insulted with impunity?

“6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

This is he who was foretold about seven hundred years before his birth, by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. xl. ver. 3.) “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the deserts a high way for our God.”

Malachi, also, who was the last of the prophets under the Jewish dispensation, prophesied respecting John the Baptist upwards of three hundred and ninety years before

before his birth. He gives us to understand, that no more prophets were to be expected till this Elijah made his appearance, and that he should come and prepare the way for Christ the Messiah. Elijah and Elias evidently mean the same person, as many texts of scripture prove.

This John was not Elijah returned from Heaven, but so like him, both in appearance and manners, that he might truly be said to be his representative on earth: even their dress appears to have been the same. St. Mark, chap. i. ver. 6. "And John was clothed with camel hair, and with a girdle of skin about his loins." II. Kings, chap. i. 8., "And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins; and he said it is Elijah the Tishbite." Elijah's resolution, temperance, perseverance and piety, were fully exemplified in John the Baptist.

As the introduction of John the Baptist was attended with many extraordinary circumstances, I trust my readers will pardon

don me, if I dwell somewhat longer upon it than the chapter I am now commenting upon would lead to. These events will be found fully recorded in the first chapter of St. Luke :

“ 5. And there was, in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia ; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

“ 6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”

We are not to infer from this passage that they were sinless, but only in general that they were exact observers of the Jewish law. There is not a perfect man in the world : human nature, we all know, represents a picture which, even in the first characters, hath its dark shades ; how far short of this desired height do most of us attain ?

Were proofs required of this, the sacred volumes would amply furnish them. “ If”
(in

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(in the words of St. John's epistle, chap. 1
ver. 8. "we say we have no sins, we
" deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
Indeed, so numerous are the texts of a similar
nature, that, if we read the scriptures
with attention, we shall be continually
minded of our own imperfections,
tracing them in the failings of the char-
acters there described.

" 7. And they had no child, because
" that Elizabeth was barren : and when
" both were now well stricken in years

" 8. And it came to pass, that while
" he executed the priest's office before God
" in the order of his course,

" 9. According to the custom of the
" priest's office, his lot was to burn incense
" when he went into the temple of the
" Lord.

" 10. And the whole multitude of the
" people were praying without at the time
" of incense.

" 11. And there appeared unto him an
" angel of the Lord, standing on the right
" side of the altar of incense.

" 12. And

" 12. And when Zacharias saw him, he
" was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

" 13. But the angel said unto him, Fear
" not, Zacharias ; for thy prayer is heard,
" and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a
" son, and thou shalt call his name John.

" 14. And thou shalt have joy and glad-
" ness ; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

" 15. For he shall be great in the sight
" of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine
" nor strong drink, and he shall be filled
" with the Holy Ghost, even from his mo-
" ther's womb.

" 16. And many of the children of Israel
" shall he turn unto the Lord their God.

" 17. And he shall go before him in the
" spirit and power of Elias, to turn the
" hearts of the fathers to the children, and
" the disobedient to the wisdom of the
" just : to make ready a people prepared
" for the Lord.

" 18. And Zacharias said unto the an-
" gel, Whereby shall I know this ? for I
" am an old man, and my wife well stricken
" in years.

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" 19. And

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“ 19. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God ; and I am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

“ 20. And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their seasons.

“ 21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the Temple.

“ 22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them : and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the Temple : for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.”

Here we see that Zacharias was so far from being sinless, that, in the instance before us, he gives a proof of his want of faith, by disbelieving the messenger of the Lord. His answer to the angel might indeed have proceeded from mere curiosity ; as in the case of the blessed Virgin, who
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angel answering, said unto
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as the prophets."

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from that, in the instance be-
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crease from mere curiosity:
the blessed Virgin, who
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made use of words to the same effect
God, who knows the heart, and pro-
mises rewards not from outward ap-
pearance alone, but from our real motives
fit to punish him for his incredulity
people who were waiting for the
Zacharias, being greatly surprised
at the uncommon length of his stay,
thought it very curious to enquire
the cause, which they perceived was
natural : their curiosity, however,
unsatisfied, until the birth of his
son, continuing dumb all that time, as
to the saying of the angel. This
caused the people to conceive an high
opinion of a child ushered into the world in
an extraordinary manner ; and his father
restored to the use of his speech
in publishing the glad tidings,
forerunner of our blessed Saviour
arrived, he himself might soon be
expected.

Let us now return to the conclusion
of the account given by St. John

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“ 7. The same came for a witness, to
“ bear witness of the light, that all men
“ through him might believe. .

“ 8. He was not that light, but was sent
“ to bear witness of that light.

“ 9. That was the true light, which
“ lighteth every man that cometh into the
“ world.”

Our blessed Lord condescends to illuminate our dark minds by his Holy Spirit, and enlightens them so that they are capable of knowing and enjoying him through faith, which gives us a foretaste of that blessed immortality he reserves for us.

“ 10. He was in the world, and the
“ world was made by him, and the world
“ knew him not.”

Must not those who disbelieve the divinity of our blessed Saviour leave this chapter out of their creed, since it appears written too plainly, and too expressly to admit
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of any other interpretation than w
words themselves naturally convey
minds.

“ 11. He came unto his own,
“ own received him not :

“ 12. But as many as received
“ them gave he power to become
“ of God, even to them that believ
“ name.

“ 13. Which were born, not of
“ nor of the flesh, nor of the will
“ but of God.

“ 14. And the word was made
“ and dwelt amongst us ; and we be
“ glory, the glory as of the only-b
“ of the Father, full of grace and

By “ his own ” we may understand
the Jewish people, who were in a
manner the chosen people of God
whole race of mankind ; he being
Creator. The Jews, to whom
came, received him not ; but the
to whom the gospel was afterwards

ed, gladly embraced it, and all that received it, he honored with the appellation of brethren; which must of course give them the title of sons of God the Father.

The word being made flesh, comprehends a blessing to every human being; tho' the Jews, and other sects of people, would wish to persuade mankind that the blessing was particularly confined to themselves.

The truly-pious Christian, who takes the scriptures for his guide, will have a very different faith concerning this mystery.

To my mind they clearly convey this doctrine, that the Saviour of mankind will not reject any one that comes to him, and that he will be equally the saviour of all those who act up to the best of their knowledge and endeavor to fill with propriety the station allotted to them, altho' it may have been their misfortune to be placed out of the reach of knowing that a saviour had died to procure them eternal happiness.

The calling in of the Gentiles seems evidently to be alluded to by Solomon, at
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the dedication of the Temple (I. chap. viii. ver. 41. 42. and 43.); for the Jews were first called, the Gentiles, in process of time, were to be put upon equal footing with them.

" 15. John bare witness of him
cried, saying, This was he of whom
spake; he that cometh after me
ferred before me: for he was before me."

" 16. And of his fulness have all
received, and grace for grace.

" 17. For the law was given by
but grace and truth cometh by
Christ.

" 18. No man hath seen God
time: the only-begotten Son, who
the bosom of the Father, he hath
clared him."

In the expression in the 15th verse
"he was before me," as well as the
18th, "the only-begotten Son, who
the bosom of the Father, he hath
clared him." St. John clearly points out

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existence of our blessed Saviour, and his unity with God the Father. John the Baptist gloried in his commission, and thought it a sufficient honor to be the forerunner of our Lord; nor would he suffer any one to entertain a notion of his being the expected Messiah.

In the 16th verse above recited, we are informed, that free grace is offered us in a most plentiful manner, and the more we improve the offered blessing, the greater will be our happiness, as more will be intrusted to us.

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, chap. ii. ver. 9., says of our Saviour, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that rich and incomprehensible perfection whereof the supreme and adorable nature is full: there is not any excellency but is to be found in the Saviour of mankind, for the Father and the Son are one, and the Son shines forth in all the glory of the Father. Again, in the following verse of the same chapter, St. Paul adds, "And ye are complete in him"

him which is the head of all principality
 "and power." Does it not raise us, as it
 were, above this world, to reflect on the
 unspeakable honors and blessings in store
 for us? Shall we then prefer vanities and
 follies to our everlasting happiness? No;
 the mind that is rightly informed will spurn
 at such enjoyments, when they interfere
 with its eternal salvation.

" 19. And this is the record of John,
 "when the Jews sent priests and Levites
 "to ask him, Who art thou?

" 20. And he confessed and denied not;
 "but confessed, I am not the Christ.

" 21. And they asked him, What then?
 "art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not.
 "Art thou that prophet? and he an-
 "swered, No.

" 22. Then said they unto him, Who
 "art thou? that we may give an answer
 "to them that sent us? What sayest thou
 "of thyself?

" 23. He said, I am the voice of one
 "crying in the wilderness, Make straight

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" the

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“ the way of the Lord, as said the prophet
“ Esaias.

“ 24. And they which were sent were
“ of the Pharisees.”

Though he was not really Elias returned to earth, yet he was the person whom the prophets foretold was to come in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for the Lord.

Had they consulted the prophets, they would have seen that his answer exactly tallied with what was prophesied of Christ's forerunner, and they could then scarcely have refused to acknowledge the person he pointed out to them as their Lord and Saviour.

“ 25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ nor Elias, neither that prophet ?”

The Pharisees would allow that the Messiah, or Elias, or that prophet, had the power

THE AND DEATH OF

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Elias, neither that

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power

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

power of making what alteration
pleased in the form of worship, but
else; therefore, they demanded of
the Baptist, by what authority he
or presumed to introduce any
into their religious ceremonies,
confessed himself to be neither of the
altered characters.

“ 26. John answered them saying
“ baptize with water; but there is
“ one among you, whom ye know

“ 27. He it is, who coming after
“ preferred before me, whose shoe I
“ I am not worthy to unloose.

“ 28. These things were done
“ at Abbara, beyond Jordan, where
“ he was baptizing.”

Great respect was paid to John the
Baptist; he was held in high estimation
looked up to as a very extraordinary
person: yet he tells the messengers
make enquiries of him, that the

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between his master and himself was so great, that the most menial offices were to him an honor for him to perform for his divine a person.

This is a striking lesson to all religious persons, not to suffer themselves to be puffed up with an idea of their superior excellency, nor to admit of any great or unbecoming honors to be paid them on such account, but to present them to the Author of every good gift.

All those who are in a situation to receive respect and attention from their fellow-creatures, should keep a strict watch over themselves, lest they encourage the ignorant and unthinking in a slavish and despicable adulation, as improper for the one to receive as the other to give.

Flattery is in itself so bewitching to the generality of mankind, that we cannot too watchfully guard against it, as it equally degrades the giver and the receiver.

“ 29. The next day John seeth Jesus
“ coming unto him, and saith, Behold thou
“ Lam

"Lamb of God which taketh away the
" sins of the world.

"30. This is he of whom I said, after
" me cometh a man which is preferred
" before me : for he was before me.

"31. And I knew him not : but that
" he should be made manifest to Israel,
" therefore am I come baptizing with water.

"32. And John bare record, saying, I
" saw the spirit descending from heaven
" like a dove, and it abode upon him ;

"33. And I knew him not : but he
" that sent me to baptize with water, the
" same said unto me, Upon whom thou
" shalt see the spirit descending and re-
" maining on him, the same is he which
" baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

"34. And I saw, and bare record that
" this is the Son of God.

"35. And again, the next day after,
" John stood and two of his disciples :

"36. And looking upon Jesus, as he
" walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of
" God."

Immediately

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Immediately after the baptism of our blessed Saviour, he was tempted by the devil, that grand foe of mankind. This circumstance is related by the other three evangelists, but omitted by St. John; probably for this reason, that, as his gospel was written long after theirs, he thought it unnecessary to mention this, and many other circumstances, which every Christian who read the scriptures must have been well acquainted with.

The wilderness was the spot chosen for this trial; a solitary desert, in which our Lord could receive no comfort or consolation from any human being. He alone could conquer and subdue such a foe.

We may trace a great resemblance, in many particulars, between our Saviour and Moses, who himself says, (Deuteronomy, chap. xviii. ver. 15.) "The Lord thy God
" will raise up to thee a prophet from the
" midst of thy brethren, like unto me;
" unto him shall ye hearken."

The Acts of the Apostles (chap. v. ver. 23.) adds, "And it shall come to pass
" that

“ that every ſoul which will not hear that
“ prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among
“ the people.”

In Exodus, (chap. xxxiv. ver. 28.) we read, that Moſes was with the Lord forty days and forty nights, during which time he did neither eat bread nor drink water. Our Saviour was the ſame length of time without food, (St. Matthew, ch. iv. ver. 2.) “ And when he had faſted forty days and “ forty nights, he was an hungred.”

This is one of the many inſtances which may be brought to prove that our bleſſed Saviour, in taking upon himſelf our nature, took it with all its inconveniences: he did not ſpare himſelf; but that he might the better judge of our ſufferings, and of the force of temptation under them, he made himſelf ſubject to hunger, thirſt, cold, and to all the weakneſſes of the body; nay, even to death itſelf, the moſt painful death of the croſs; nor was he more exempt from the ſufferings of the mind, as I ſhall have occaſion hereafter more fully to ſhew, when we view him
thedding

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shedding tears of distress on the death of a friend, and suffering under the dreadful agony, insomuch as to pour drops of blood through his pores, for expiation of those sins which we had committed upon him.

Our Lord has, upon this occasion, given us an admirable lesson, of the greatest importance: that obedience to the law of God is to take place of every other consideration, even of life itself, which is our duty, in most cases, to guard with care till he who gave, shall think fit to resume.

When suffering under all the distress of hunger, the tempter puts him in mind that he might immediately relieve his wants, by commanding the stones to become bread, this he disdainfully rejects. Though Lord of all, and having all nature at his command, yet, in his human character, as he was to suffer as mere man, he determined to submit to every extremity of distress rather than deviate from God's law.

Having failed in his attempt to make any impression on our blessed Lord through the

the wants of the body, or through the pride of shewing his power by casting himself down from the pinnacle of the temple unhurt, the devil attacks him with his last, and, as he thought, surest temptation, (and well he might think so whilst considering him as merely mortal,) by the offer of whatever could gratify the pride, vanity, and lust of man: he shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, offering to put them all under his command, if he would do him homage; but in this attempt, as in the former, he was equally foiled. The prophecy that the seed of the woman should bruise his head, was now to be fulfilled. Finding, therefore, all his arts to ensnare or deceive our blessed Lord fruitless, and conscious no doubt that this was he with whom he had been threatened, he quits him in despair.

Thus may we also conquer the malice of our eternal and inveterate foe, if we resolve to tread in the footsteps of our Lord! We should resolutely resist the

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first suggestion of vice, nor presume much upon our own strength, as to suffer ourselves to be led into temptation. When evil thoughts assail us, should we give them encouragement, though without design to carry them into act, we give our enemy that advantage over us which he is constantly seeking for : we should hold no parley with him ; our safest course on all such occasions is flight.

We are not to suppose that the enemy of mankind, though vanquished by our triumphant captain, is therefore destroyed : his power, it is true, is so much curtailed that he cannot injure us, but through our own neglect. If we keep ourselves on watch, and adhere to those rules of discipline laid down by our Lord, we shall be secure against all his attempts : if, the contrary, we abandon those rules, and put ourselves in his way, he is too active in mischief to neglect the opportunity which our inconsiderate folly may give him. Neither let us suppose that, if he have once conquered him, he will
therefore

therefore disheartened : we must expect to find him attacking us in some other quarter, with, perhaps, a more dangerous allurements ; so that our only means of safety, is to let our vigilance keep pace with his malice.

Did we want further assurances of our power to overcome every temptation, if we really struggle against it, we may find it in St. Paul, I. Cor. chap. x. ver. 13. " There hath no temptation taken you but what is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

" 37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

" 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye ? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master!) where dwellest thou ? He saith unto them, come and see.

N 2

" 39. They

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“ 39. They came and saw where he
“ dwelt, and abode with him that day:
“ for it was about the tenth hour.

“ 40. One of the two which heard
“ John speak, and followed him, was An-
“ drew, Simon Peter's brother.

“ 41. He first findeth his own brother
“ Simon, and saith unto him, We have
“ found the Messias; which is, being inter-
“ preted, the Christ.

“ 42. And he brought him to Jesus.
“ And when Jesus beheld him, he saith,
“ Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou
“ shalt be called Cephas; which is by in-
“ terpretation, A stone.”

These good men were not desirous of
confining so great a blessing to themselves,
but were anxious to spread the joyful
news of their having found the Messiah,
or Christ, which had been foretold by the
prophets.

Our blessed Lord distinguished St. Pe-
ter, very particularly, when he was first
brought to him, by the change of his name;
and

and probably with his new name he endowed him with qualities suitable to its import.

Poole observes, that Peter was, prior to this (according to the name of his father Jonas, which being interpreted signifies a dove,) of a fearful and timorous disposition. Cephas implies a stone, or rock; and it seems to have been the design of our Saviour to point out, that, for the future, he should be steady, firm, and full of courage and constancy. In the remainder of his life we have but one instance of his departing from this character, and that proceeded from a too great confidence in himself; as a punishment for which he was suffered to fall into the meanest and most despicable of vices. Severe repentance, and, we can have no doubt, a full pardon, instantly followed the crime.

This is a comfortable lesson for all good Christians, when surprized into the commission of sin, and points out to them the only means they can take to regain their peace of mind, and reconcile them to themselves.

“ 43. The

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“ 43. The day following, Jesus wo
“ go forth into Galilee, and findeth Phi
“ and saith unto him, Follow me.

“ 44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida,
“ city of Andrew and Peter.

“ 45. Philip findeth Nathaniel, a
“ saith unto him, We have found him
“ whom Moses in the law and the proph
“ did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son
“ Joseph.

“ 46. And Nathaniel said unto hi
“ Can there any good thing come out
“ Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Co
“ and see.

“ 47. Jesus saw Nathaniel coming
“ him, and saith unto him, Behold an
“ raelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”

Such should be the character of ev
Christian; such will be the characte
every one who follows the gospel rules

“ 48. Nathaniel saith unto him, When
“ knowest thou me? Jesus answered a
“ said unto him, Before that Philip cal
“ th

THE AND DEATH OF

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

ay following, Jesus went
Galilee, and findeth Philip

him, Follow me.

Philip was of Bethsaida,
and Peter.

findeth Nathaniel,

We have found him
the law and the prophets
of Nazareth, the son

Nathaniel said unto him,

good thing come out of thee,

Philip saith unto him, Canst

thou Nathaniel coming from

into him, Behold an Israelite

in whom is no guile.

the character of every

will be the character of

shows the gospel rules

saith unto him, Where

? Jesus answered and

saith unto him, I have

before that Philip called

thee.

"thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree."

"I saw thee.

"49. Nathaniel answered and said

"to him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of

"thou art the King of Israel.

"50. Jesus answered and said

"him, Because I said unto thee, I

"under the fig-tree, believest thou

"thalt see greater things than these

"51. And he saith unto him,

"verily, I say unto you, hereafter

"see heaven open, and the angels

"ascending and descending upon thee

"of Man!"

Nathaniel's immediate and zealous

may be accounted for by the pure

innocence of his mind: the soil was

to receive the seed of truth, which

quickly took root as soon as sown

having no weeds to choke or impede

growth, flourished abundantly. In

the gratification of being highly ap

preciated by his master, and received a

commission from him that he should see greater

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than those which had just carried conviction to his mind. This promise is fully explained by our Lord, in the verse just recited.

May the Almighty grant us grace follow the conduct of Nathaniel, that Israelite in whom was no guile! and then we may hope to see greater things, continually, than any we have seen! we hope to see his promises opening more and more, and his grace still farther extended towards us.

To Him, for all the holy instruction and pious examples he has afforded us, be all praise, thanksgiving, and worship, world without end! Amen!

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. II.

"1. **A**N D the third day there was a
" marriage in Cana of Galilee ;
" and the mother of Jesus was there.

" 2. And both Jesus was called, and
" his disciples, to the marriage."

Our Lord seems purposely to have distinguished this sacred institution with his presence, and, by this performance of his first miracle, to restore it to its former credit, which it had greatly lost amongst the Jews, who made no scruple, upon the most frivolous pretences, of getting rid of their
○ wives,

wives, by giving them a bill of divorce. Our blessed Saviour wished to reform a practice which was attended with numberless evils; and therefore gives the weight of his authority, not only by his presence, but precepts, to this sacred tie, decreed from the beginning by the Almighty, for the wisest purposes. Our Lord, indeed, made it a rule, upon all occasions, to endeavor to draw people by mildness and gentleness into the right path; and for this purpose, though reproached for it by the Jews, he frequently accepted invitations, to draw, by gentle means, sinners to repentance. In how different a point of view does this conduct of our Lord place the duties of religion, to that in which some gloomy sectaries represent it? In the practice of the former, we see that cheerfulness which should naturally be the result of a self-approving conscience: on the countenance of the latter, we see a constant gloom, attended with that severity of behaviour and of animadversion on the conduct of others, as if the Father of Mercies could be only pleased

pleased when his creatures were inflicting torments on themselves. Of the religion of our blessed Lord, it may be truly said, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Our Saviour, who knew every thought of the human heart, judged such seasons to be particularly proper for making an impression upon it, and therefore gave many of his lessons, both of morality and divinity, at such meetings. Innocent amusements are not only allowable, but a necessary relaxation to the mind; which cannot, more than the body, admit of constant exertion of its powers. The danger lies in our making them our business, and becoming too much attached to them, to the neglect of our serious duties: when this is the case, they change their nature, and from innocent amusements become dangerous indulgences, and ought to be entirely laid aside till we can bring our inclinations under due regulation.

The apostles did, literally, take up their cross and follow their Lord; but, with us,

who are happily freed from religious persecution, the taking up our cross and following him, is to be understood, of conquering our lusts and passions; entering the Father of all Mercies to enable us to conquer our evil habits, particularly sins which by the natural bent of our disposition, or by custom, we are most apt to commit; and resolutely persevering in our duty, in despite of difficulty and danger; in defiance of fashion and custom, of the sneer of the vicious, or ridicule of the infidel. Neither must we, in consideration of our own ease, lose an opportunity of being useful to our fellow-creature therein we honor God, who will not allow us to go unrewarded. Since we know that our duty, if steadily pursued, will make us blessed to all eternity, and that the sufferings of the longest life are nothing, when compared to the rewards which will follow, shall we relinquish such glorious expectations to avoid present trial or inconvenience?

It is common to observe, that si

one is a martyr to such a disorder : those who have been the cause of their own sufferings, but who have repented of the vices that produced them, may think themselves happy in having a mode of expiating them, by their patience ; whilst those whose sufferings proceed from the immediate infliction of God, or are derived to them from the follies or vices of their ancestors, without any fault of their own, shall they murmur ? shall they suffer the pains of martyrdom and lose its reward ? Those who, under such circumstances, submit with patience, fortitude and resignation to the will of their God, placing their firm reliance upon him, that he will in his own good time deliver them, would, most probably, have laid down their lives, and submitted to whatever he in his wisdom saw fit, had they been called to the trial. May we not therefore suppose, that the crown of martyrdom will be placed on the heads of many who were never called upon to give up their lives for the truth of the gospel ? What a consolation must such a reflection

reflection prove, to those who are suffering under the pressure of long and painful illnesses, or other afflictions incident to human nature.

Great bodily as well as mental sufferings will unfit a person from taking an active part in life ; but those who are not called to very severe trials, and have leisure and opportunity afforded them, should endeavor to employ their time in the most useful manner to their fellow-creatures.

Though perhaps not strictly arising out of the text I am at present treating of, I wish to be allowed here to observe (and I should hope my readers, since I pretend not to correctness of style or composition, would grant it me as a general indulgence to express my ideas as they arise) that the life of our blessed Lord was actively spent in the service of mankind : that he “ went about doing good,” and never missed an opportunity of affording the assistance of his power, or advice, to those who stood in need of it. Those who retire from the world, to live a more religious life,

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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but for a state of society ; and th
ever talents they have been blef
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in the service of their fellow-c
But, perhaps, it will be said, by t
cates for religious retirement,
temptations to vice are much str
the world than in a state of secluf
it. Of this, I must confess, I enter
strong doubts ; but, allowing it
cannot the power of the Almighty
afford us protection in the busy
life, as in the deepest retirement
temptations are stronger, we shall
the more powerful assistance from
If we would depend upon
strength, indeed, every day's ex
may teach us how unable we are
selves, to perform our most comm
as we ought, and that we have
from that quarter. Doctor Moo

travels, vol. III. page 362, has an observation very applicable to the present purpose: he says, "The same men ~~who~~ admire the founder of Christianity, for going about continually doing good, have thought it a duty to spend their whole lives in cells, doing nothing."

Nor is the choice of John the Baptist of the wilderness, for the scene of his ministry, any argument for this kind of retirement: he was actively employed in his duty, and probably chose that spot to avoid the inconveniences which might have arisen in more inhabited places, from the multitudes that flocked to him.

Elijah may serve as an instance of the duty I wish to impress, when reprimanded by the word of the Lord for quitting his station, (I. Kings, chap. xix. ver. 9.) "And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there: and behold the word of the Lord came to him; and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

"15. And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way," &c.

Though

Though private devotion is very commendable, at proper seasons, yet it must give place to public worship. This should be more particularly attended to, by those who are placed in situations of power and authority, to instruct others; instead of flying from the stations in which God has placed us, let it be our earnest endeavor to render ourselves as useful as we can in them, that we may, hereafter, hear the joyful sound of "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. (Matthew xxv. 21.)

"3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

"4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."

Our Lord, as we are told in other parts of scripture, fulfilled all the duties which

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his

his station in life imposed upon him: he was particularly obedient and submissive to his earthly parents: this reprimand therefore to his mother, must have been drawn from him by some powerful motive. Upon the present occasion, he was about to perform his first miracle in support of the truth of his doctrines; and to his acts of this supernatural kind, he refers the Scribes and Pharisees, in proof of his divine mission. May we not then reasonably suppose that our blessed Lord, to whom future events were as clear as past ones, might wish to guard his disciples against that worship of his mother (who though highly distinguished by the favor of the Almighty was a mere mortal like themselves,) which he foresaw would be paid to her in after-times; and that he therefore took occasion to make this public declaration, that she had nothing to do with the great business of his life, (the redemption of mankind,) and that he would not permit even of her interference in any matter that related to it?

“ 5. His

“ 5. His mother saith unto the servants,
“ Whatever he saith unto you, do it.

“ 6. And there were set there six water-
“ pots of stone, after the manner of the
“ purifying of the Jews, containing two or
“ three firkins apiece.

“ 7. Jesus saith unto them, fill the
“ water-pots with water: and they filled
“ them up to the brim.

“ 8. And he saith unto them, draw out
“ now, and bear unto the governor of the
“ feast; and they bare it.”

Our blessed Lord could have instantly caused the water-pots to be filled with wine; but he chose that this miracle should be very striking, so that all present should feel its force: he therefore, first, directed the servants to fill the water-pots; which must have produced conviction in them; and then to draw off some of the wine and to carry it to the governor of the feast; which precluded the possibility of a doubt being entertained of its reality.

It was a custom amongst the Jews, when a feast was made, that the giver of it should appoint one of his friends to regulate the entertainment ; to see that the guests were supplied with whatever they wanted ; and, in a word, that every thing was properly conducted : he was therefore styled the governor, or ruler, of the feast. To this person, therefore, our Saviour directed some of the new-made wine to be taken ; as he, being best-informed of the quantity and quality of the liquor provided, would naturally make inquiries from whence this fresh supply came, and so become acquainted with all the particulars of the miracle, which must have astonished him too much to have suffered him to conceal it from the company present : and this appears to have been actually the case ; as we find by the succeeding verses, that he sent for the bridegroom, and questioned him upon the subject ; and the bridegroom would naturally sift the matter to the bottom.

“ 9. When

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR. 111

"9. When the ruler of the feast had
"tasted the water that was made wine,
"and knew not whence it was, (but the
"servants which drew the water knew,)
"the governor of the feast called the
"bridegroom, and saith unto him ;

"10. Every man at the beginning doth
"set forth good wine, and when men
"have well drunk, then that which is
"worse : but thou hast kept the good
"wine until now.

"11. This beginning of miracles did
"Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested
"forth his glory ; and his disciples believed
"on him."

This miracle, therefore, was conducted in such a manner, that not a shadow of doubt could have been entertained by any person present.

"12. After this, he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples : and they continued there not many days."

What

What the cause of their journey was, we are not told. It might possibly be for the purpose of taking leave of his friends, that nothing might interrupt his public ministry ; for after this period he asks, " Who are my mother and my brethren ?" as if he had said, all private connections are now to give place, and those are my nearest relations who adhere to my gospel.

" 13. And the Jews' passover was at hand.

" 14. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the Temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting :

" 15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep and the oxen ; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables ;

" 16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence : make not my father's house an house of merchandise."

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AND DEATH OF

of their journey was, might possibly be for the leave of his friends, to interrupt his public ministry. In this period he asks, "What say ye unto me, and my brethren?" and alludes to his private connections with the Jews, and those are my near friends, who adhere to my gospel.

Jews' passover was at

he went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple those that sold the doves, and the money-changers, sitting:

he had made a scourge of small rods, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and the money-changers' money-tables;

and said unto them that sold there, What things hence: make not this house an house of merchandise.

The

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

The authority which our Lord exerted upon the present occasion, was founded upon the general mildness and meekness of his character, that the priests might not have been astonished at it, and would, if they had not been restrained by the authority of that superior and invisible power which was then exercised. May this serve as an example to us, that however quiet we may be in matters of mere indifference, yet when the honor of God is insulted, it is our duty to express our most marked indignation, and to exert all our power in its defence!

"17. And his disciples remember that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

"18. Then answered the Jews unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

"19. Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up.

"

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“ 20. Then said the Jews, Forty and *fi*
“ years was this temple in building, *an*
“ wilt thou rear it up in three days ?

“ 21. But he spake of the temple of
“ his body.

“ 22. When, therefore, he was *risen*
“ from the dead, his disciples remembered
“ that he had said this unto them : and
“ they believed the scripture, and the word
“ which Jesus had said.”

None of our blessed Saviour’s hearers, at that time, understood him ; but, after his resurrection, his disciples remembered it ; and, by the influence of the Holy Ghost, they were made the blessed instruments of reforming an ignorant and perverse generation.

The parables of our Lord may be aptly compared to good seed sown in the earth, which sometimes remains long in the ground, for want of refreshing showers ; but when the Almighty is pleased to send a gracious rain upon it, it springs up, and gives the prospect of a plentiful harvest ;
and

and this was fully exemplified in the disciples: most of the parables which our blessed Saviour spake to the multitude, he explained in private to them: they were to publish the gospel of peace; therefore every thing was made as clear to them by their master, whilst he continued with them, as possible. He tells them, it was expedient for them that he should leave them; but consoles them with the promise that he will send them another comforter, which should abide and continue with them in all their troubles and persecutions.

" 23. Now when he was at Jerusalem
 " at the passover, on the feast day, many
 " believed in his name, when they saw the
 " miracles which he did.

" 24. But Jesus did not commit him-
 " self unto them, because he knew all men,

" 25. And needed not that any should
 " testify of man: for he knew what was
 " in man."

Our Saviour did not judge of men we are obliged to judge of them, from appearances, which are often deceitful: he had a much surer means; the knowledge of every thought of their hearts: knowing, therefore, the fickleness even of those who professed to believe in him, he did not commit himself unto them. We ought not to trust so entirely to appearances, however fair, as to build our action upon them alone. Thus the Lord warren Samuel, (Book I. ch. xvi. ver. 7.) "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature: because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

May the Father of all Mercies so purify our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, that we may be acceptable in his sight, through Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour
Amen.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. III.

" 1. **T**HERE was a man of the Phari-
" fees, named Nicodemus, a ruler
" of the Jews :

" 2. The same came to Jesus, by night,
" and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that
" thou art a teacher come from God : for
" no man can do these miracles that thou
" doest, except God be with him."

Although Nicodemus believed in our blessed Saviour and honored him, in private, yet he did not choose it should be known that he had any reverence for him, for fear of the Jews, who would probably have degraded him from the rank he held amongst them : his faith, therefore, was

Q 2 not

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not of so zealous a nature as to lead him for the sake of it, to give up all his temporal advantages. Under such circumstances, how gracious and condescending was it in our Lord, to give him a kind reception at such an unseasonable hour. This should be a lesson to us, to bear with each other's follies and imperfections, never refusing through pride or prejudice, to help or give instruction to those of our fellow-creatures who stand in need of it.

“ 3. Jesus answered and said unto him
“ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except
“ man be born again, he cannot see the
“ kingdom of God.

“ 4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How
“ can a man be born when he is old
“ can he enter the second time into his
“ mother's womb and be born?”

It seems rather extraordinary that a man in so high a station could have supposed that our Saviour spake literally. As ruler of the Jews and an expounder of the

Mosaic

Mosaic law, he knew that God was merciful and gracious to sinners, and that their sins were pardoned and themselves accepted in the great day of atonement, if they were sincere in their addresses to God: he might therefore have been assured that our Lord spake figuratively.

“ 5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

The gospel which our Saviour was about to publish, is frequently styled by him, the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven. Baptism is the introduction into this kingdom. Such glorious advantages may well be called the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Heaven; but let us always keep in mind, that “where much is given, much is required;” and that, in proportion to the blessings held out to us, will be our condemnation, if we neglect to improve them. The mere profession

profession of Christianity, unless we are Christ's faithful servants, will not entitle us to Heaven ; for " even the Devils believe and tremble."

Christ died for all mankind ; nor can any be deprived of the benefits of His death, but through their own faults ; although it is written that there is no narrow way under Heaven by which men can be saved but that of Christ Jesus, yet we are also told by St. Paul, (Rom. ch. ii. ver. 14.) " that those which have not the law, and do by the nature the things contained in the law, are a law unto themselves ;" and to such will the benefits of Christ's death undoubtedly be imparted. This doctrine is fully confirmed, in the seventh chapter of the Revelation by St. John, and offers to the delightful a subject of contemplation to the charitable mind, that I shall make no apology for inserting it at length. " After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Throne, and before

"before the Lamb, clothed with white
 "robes; and palms in their hands; and
 "cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation
 "to our God which sitteth upon the
 "Throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the
 "angels stood round about the Throne
 "and about the elders and the four beasts,
 "and fell before the Throne on their faces,
 "and worshipped God, saying, Amen :
 "Blessing and glory, and wisdom and
 "thanksgiving, and honor and power, and
 "might, be unto our God, for ever and
 "ever. Amen. And one of the elders
 "answered, saying unto me, What are
 "these which are arrayed in white robes?
 "and whence came they? And I said
 "unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he
 "said unto me, These are they which
 "came out of great tribulation, and have
 "washed their robes and made them white
 "in the blood of the Lamb; therefore
 "are they before the Throne of God, and
 "serve him day and night in his Temple;
 "and he that sitteth on the Throne shall
 "dwell among them: they shall hunger
 "no

“ no more, neither thirst any more ; neither
 “ shall the sun light on them, or any heat.
 “ For the Lamb which is in the midst of
 “ the Throne shall feed them, and shall
 “ lead them unto living fountains of water,
 “ and God shall wipe away all tears from
 “ their eyes.”

Nothing could have been made use of as a fitter emblem of purification, than water : the soul stained with guilt requires to be cleansed ; and as this pure element, when applied to the body, removes all impurities ; so does it, by grace, from the soul : not as possessing this virtue in itself, but as “ the outward and visible sign of
 “ an inward and spiritual grace, given unto
 “ us, ordained by Christ himself, as a
 “ means whereby we receive the same, and
 “ a pledge to assure us thereof.”

Sensible objects are necessary in this our mortal frame, to make any strong impression upon our minds, and therefore God has been graciously pleased to appoint them as the channels of spiritual blessings, which he has promised should
 flow

low from them, if we with true faith rely upon him in his sacraments.

An objection has been brought against infant baptism; that children cannot commit actual sin till they are of an age to distinguish right from wrong, and consequently can stand in need of no regeneration. But in whatever difficulties the doctrine of original sin may engage us, we must all feel that "we are by nature born 'in sin, and the children of wrath.'" There can certainly therefore be no impropriety in this holy institution, as the symbol of our being made "the children of grace."

How necessary is it for parents and guardians to instruct and impress the tender minds of young people with a due sense of the solemn engagement they are about to take on themselves when they go to confirmation; an institution established by the Church for the purpose of publicly renewing in our own persons, when arrived at years of judgment, the vows made for us by our god-fathers and god-mothers

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when our tender years would not admit of our making them for ourselves, and admirably calculated to make a lively and lasting impression where the mind has been properly prepared to receive it. How melancholy then is the reflection, that such numbers of young people are suffered to go to this solemn ceremony without any previous idea of the nature of it? Is there not reason to fear that it will form a heavy charge against those to whom the Almighty has given them in trust, either by relationship or other ties, that, through their neglect, their wards are deprived of the greater benefits of this institution?

Our blessed Lord, by taking our nature upon himself, has restored it to his original, nay more than its original, brightness, giving us a title to become the sons of God thro' his inheritance: let us take care not to lose so glorious a privilege, by refusing our compliance to the conditions on which so inestimable an advantage was granted us, and which every Christian may firmly

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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fully expressed in the vow made
name at his baptism.

" 7. Marvel not that I said
" ye must be born again.

" 8. The wind bloweth where
" and thou hearest the sound thereof
" canst not tell whence it cometh
" whither it goeth : so is every
" born of the Spirit."

How different were even the
themselves, before and after they
ceived the gift of the Holy Ghost
not their actions after this memor-
prove them quite new men?
period, they became resolute in
their duty, in defiance of all
and dangers. Nor was this first
confined to them: daily experience
that the sacred influence of the
has been constantly imparted to
ance of the sincere and well
Christian, and we know that it

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be withheld from those who ask it faithfully.

“ 9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be ?

“ 10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things ?

“ 11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen ; and ye receive not our witness.”

Nicodemus still continues in his mistake : had he understood that our Saviour was speaking of the spirit of God, he would have had no such cause for surprize, as the Jewish law was a shadow of good things to come ; but the attention of the Jews, even of the best-meaning amongst them, (of which number Nicodemus seems to have been) was so taken up with the ceremonial part of their law as to prevent them, in a great measure, from fixing their minds on spiritual things. Our blessed Lord reprov-
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Nicodemus answered and said :
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He answered and said unto him
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Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee,
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understanding that our Saviour
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of meaning amongst them-
selves. Nicodemus seems to have
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law as to prevent them, from
fixing their minds on
Our blessed Lord reproved

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

ed him for his ignorance : as a
teacher of Israel, he ought to be
better informed.

" 12. If I have told you earthly
" and ye believe not, how shall ye
" if I tell you of heavenly things
" 13. And no man hath ascended
" to Heaven but he that came down
" Heaven, even the Son of Man
" in Heaven."

Our Saviour reminds him, that
drawn comparisons between sub-
spiritual mysteries, and earthly
which were constantly in his view
he understood not, and adds, I
would he be able to comprehend
glorious mysteries without such
ascension as he had been gracious
to indulge him with.

Before the Son of God descended
Heaven, for their instruction,
were, comparatively speaking,
of the deepest ignorance of

knowledge : they had occasionally been indulged with a feeble ray of light, but at best could only be said "to see, as "through a glass, darkly ;" but our blessed Lord brought life and immortality to light by his gospel.

Before I quit the last verse, allow me just to remark, that it contains another declaration which must be entirely passed over by those who deny our Lord's divinity ; but to such may we not aptly apply the text which says, "Eyes have they, "and see not ; ears have they, and hear "not."

"14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent "in the wilderness, even so must the Son "of Man be lifted up ;

"15. That whosoever believeth in him "should not perish, but have eternal life."

The Son of Man was to be lifted up, that is to say, to be crucified ; and as those who were bitten by serpents were healed when they looked up to the serpent

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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Man was to be lifted up
to be crucified; and as
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pent which Moses had made an-
on high for that purpose, so in like
ner must we continually look up
cified Saviour for relief from the
of the old serpent, man's enemy
the beginning of the world: this
make us love, serve and obey him,
secure to us the most inestimable
blessings, eternal life.

"16. For God so loved the world
"he gave his only-begotten Son
"whosoever believeth in him shall
"perish, but have everlasting life.

What a blessing to Adam and
race! Let us, for a moment, survey
world in that state of condemnation
which Adam, by his disobedience
duced it, and that we were informed
thing less than that God the Son,
begotten of God the Father, should
descend to take our nature upon
come into the world in a poor, con-
despised station, live many years

uncomfortable situation, subject to all ~~the~~ infirmities of our nature, and at last suffer a most painful death on the cross, or ~~that~~ every soul upon earth must perish; should we not think the case desperate, and ~~that~~ the whole world must be condemned ere so wonderful, so incredible an instance of condescension, compassion, and love, could be found. Yet all these wonders have ~~been~~ performed in our behalf, by our blessed Redeemer, even whilst we were rebels to his authority.

“ 17. For God sent not his Son into the
 “ world to condemn the world, but that
 “ the world through him should be saved.”

And shall we not with the utmost obedience, gratitude, and love, acknowledge such an astonishing interference in our favor? Had we been left in the deplorable situation of sinners without a Saviour, we should have thought no conditions too hard by which we could have attained such a blessing: the service of our whole
 lives

lives would then have been thought barely sufficient to manifest our gratitude for relief from so great a load of woe. Shall we, then, because in our possession, treat those high and unmerited favors with indifference? Let us not prove ourselves so devoid of gratitude, but make this the subject of our most serious study and contemplation; which, if we have not hearts of flint, cannot fail to excite in us a zealous wish to make every return in our power, by the sincerity and humility of our faith and obedience.

“ 18. He that believeth on him, is not
 “ condemned ; but he that believeth not
 “ is condemned already ; because he hath
 “ not believed in the name of the only-
 “ begotten Son of God.”

Those who know, and obstinately continue to reject their Saviour, we are informed by scripture, must be condemned, as there is no other way to salvation, but through the merits of the Son of God :

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nothing can be more just : and they must expect that he, who offered to be their merciful Saviour and was rejected, will appear, at the last day, in the character of an offended judge.

“ 19. And this is condemnation : that
“ light is come into the world, and men
“ loved darkness rather than light, because
“ their deeds were evil.

“ 20. For every one that doeth evil,
“ hateth the light, lest his deeds should be
“ reproved.

“ 21. But he that doeth the truth cometh
“ to the light, that his deeds may be made
“ manifest that they are wrought in God.”

Christ is the light foretold by the prophets : he is styled, in the beginning of this gospel, “ the true light.” Every one who continues in sin, by choice, rejects those pure and divine precepts given by our Saviour, which directly oppose his practice ; nor will an outward profession of them, for
con-

conveniency, or through fear or shame, avail in the sight of God who judgeth the heart, though it may serve to impose upon our fellow-creatures.

If we will not give ourselves the trouble to search the scriptures, how can we expect to be blessed with the first of all knowledge, the knowledge that leadeth to life eternal? Is it not strange that the object of reading the holy scriptures should be so little understood, that many people should think they have done their duty by hurrying over a few chapters of them, instead of considering them as the mode of acquiring knowledge by a diligent search after it? Such persons mistake the means for the object of their study.

There is no merit in the mere reading the scriptures: to make it praise-worthy, it must be undertaken from an earnest desire to learn our duty, that we may be able to perform it. Some people think it quite sufficient to go once in the week to hear parts of them read in the church; and

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though, from want of due attention v there, and of consulting their bibles w they return home, they understand l of what they have heard, are perfectly tisfied with themselves, in the persuat that they have performed all that t duty requires of them. But can we : pose that, when the Son of God has d and suffered so much for us, he will acc such careless returns and cold indiffer as if his inestimable favors were scarc worthy our attention or our thanks !

How severe a mortification must it to a pious and humane pastor, who labored with the utmost diligence for instruction of those intrusted to his c to find them averse to assist him in endeavors to promote their own welfi yet this is too often the case.

The great object of such a character I have described, and his first wish, n be (in the words of a favorite author of own times), that when he pens his fold eternity, there may not be one of his fl wanting. How great is the difference

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" 22. After these things cam
 "and his disciples into Judea, and
 "he tarried with them and baptize

To do, or cause to be done by
 is frequently mentioned under th
 terms, not only in scripture but in c
 conversation: an instance of this

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in the verse above recited. Jesus did himself baptize, but commanded his disciples to baptize.

“ 23. And John also was baptizing
“ Enon, near to Salim, because there v
“ much water there : and they came a
“ were baptized ;

“ 24. For John was not yet cast in
“ prison.

“ 25. Then there arose a question
“ tween some of John's disciples and
“ Jews, about purifying.”

Water being very scarce in that part of the world, John always chose his situation where there was the greatest plenty, that he might with the more ease baptize multitudes that resorted to him.

The Jews were commanded by the law to purify themselves, at set times they had also, by their traditions, introduced many more : this ceremony was held in the utmost veneration : wherefore, they saw John baptizing a
numb

numbers, they were led to inquire whether it was John's intention to substitute baptism in the room of some of their purifications, or if it were intended as a mere type, or shadow, to cease when the Messiah should come.

" 26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

The disciples of John the Baptist thought it an affront to their master that any one should presume to baptize and draw such numbers after him, particularly one who had himself come and received baptism from him: they thought all the merit he had, was derived from their master; for whom their regard was so great that they considered his honor and credit at stake, and were consequently extremely jealous of one whom they looked upon as an intruder.

" 27. John

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“ 27. John answered and said, a man
“ can receive nothing except it be given
“ him from Heaven.

“ 28. Ye yourselves bear me witness
“ that I said I am not the Christ, but that
“ I am sent before him.

“ 29. He that hath the bride, is the
“ bridegroom ; but the friend of the bride-
“ groom which standeth and heareth him
“ rejoiceth greatly because of the bride-
“ groom's voice. This my joy, therefore
“ is fulfilled.”

John always told his followers, that far from his being the Christ, he was only one of his attendants, sent forward to prepare his way ; that his master was the shepherd, who would appoint such persons to guard and watch over his flock as he should think proper ; that he himself received his commission from him ; and then could they wish him to endeavour to silence or oppose the Lord of Life, who was the constant language held by the Baptist.

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John answered and said, a man
gives nothing except it be given
from Heaven.

Let yourselves bear me witness
that I am not the Christ, but I
stand before him.

He that hath the bride, is the
bridegroom; but the friend of the
bride, which standeth and heareth his
voice, greatly because of the bride,
rejoiceth. This my joy, therefore,
is fulfilled.

John always told his followers, that
he was not the Christ, he was only
an attendant, sent forward to
prepare the way; that his master was the
one who would appoint such persons
to watch over his flock as he
thought proper; that he himself had
received his commission from him: how
could they wish him to endeavor to
oppose the Lord of Life! Such
was the language held by John.

Our blessed Saviour styles himself
the bridegroom to the church, and John
rejoices in the honor of being one of the
attendants of the bridegroom; for whom, he,
in preaching, was to prepare the people.
His office was to John the Baptist the
greatest joy which he could receive
in his earthly tabernacle.

“ 30. He must increase, but I must
decrease.”

Our Lord was as the rising sun;
the Baptist as the morning star,
having fulfilled its office in announcing
the near approach, is lost in the blaze of
this glorious luminary. From this
time John's followers decreased, and he
was shortly after cast into prison; but
the blessed Saviour shone more and
more every day.

“ 31. He that cometh from above
is above all: he that is of the earth
is of the earth and of the flesh.”

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“ earthly, and speaketh of the earth :
 “ that cometh from Heaven, is above :

John here tells his disciples, that
 own origin being from the earth, his lan-
 guage and instructions were suitable to
 mere mortal ; but that he who came from
 Heaven, excelled all others, as much
 the dignity of his person as in the sublimity
 of his mind and actions.

“ 32. And what he hath seen and heard
 “ that he testifieth, and no man receiveth
 “ eth his testimony. He that hath
 “ received his testimony hath set to his seal
 “ that God is true.”

Those who accepted Christ, and believed
 in him, would of course set their seal
 belief to all God's promises respecting
 Messiah contained in the Old Testament
 and be convinced of the truth of every
 word which God had there spoken.

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2. LIFE AND DEATH OF

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

"34. For he whom God ha
speaketh the words of God; f
giveth not the spirit by measu
him."

He whom God hath sent from
spake not, as the prophets of old w
sent from God, the language of insp
when Christ spake, it was God him
spoke, he being one with the Fathe
all worlds; for in him the fulness
godhead dwelt bodily: he had the
of all in himself, and not the
only.

"35. The Father loveth the S
hath given all things into his ha

Our Lord speaks of himself in t
terms, St. Matthew, chap. xi. v
"All things are delivered unto m
Father; and no man knoweth
but the Father: neither know
man the Father, save the Son,
to whomsoever the Son will reve

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God hath committed all things relative to mankind to Christ, more particularly the power of life and death, and every thing that leads to their eternal salvation: let us, then, flee to the Almighty Father by the only means he has appointed, thro' the mediation of his truly-beloved son, our only saviour and redeemer. Can we for a moment hesitate to enlist under his banners, whose "yoke is easy and burden light." The members of Christ are not without a yoke: that is, a law, or rule by which they are to walk; but how light is this, compared to that of the law, which imposed many burthenfome ordinances, whereas here, we are enjoined nothing but what the best feelings of our nature would lead us to practice, even if they were not made our duty; namely, to love God, and to live in charity and good-will with our neighbour.

How great also is the difference between those who endeavor to obey him, and become his true and faithful disciples, and those who reject him: the minds of t

former are contented and serene, ready to quit this world or to continue in it, as best pleases their beloved master ; patient under sufferings, looking forward to the reward promised to all Christ's faithful servants. To arrive at this state of mind, is superior to the greatest riches we can enjoy on this side the grave : it may be well called the pearl of great price ; and when once we have attained this heavenly disposition, the world cannot, with all its treasures, bribe us to part with so inestimable a blessing : we are then risen above its temptations and vanities. Contrast this state of mind with that of those who reject their saviour, though their situation in life may be ever so rich or prosperous : they are for ever restless and uneasy, seeking for something which eludes their grasp ; discontented with the present, dreading the future, so that they may be aptly compared to the troubled sea. Our enemy, faithless even to his own servants, is ever busy to prevent their enjoyment of
quiet

quiet in this world, or of happiness in the world to come.

“ 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.”

One reason, and a very forcible one, why some people are averse to the belief of the scriptures, is, that they do not choose to part with some darling vice, and were they to acknowledge their belief in the religion of Christ, it would be to proclaim to the world that they live in a state of condemnation; they therefore endeavor to persuade themselves, and those with whom they converse, out of all faith. But pious Christians are each day more and more confirmed in their belief, by a serious study of the scriptures: this delightful employment raises their thoughts to Heaven, and prepares their minds to make their humble petitions to the throne of grace, where truth and mercy dwell;
where

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR. 145

where they are sure of a welcome reception, and of rest unto their souls.

May the Almighty grant us grace to be of that glorious number, for the sake of our blessed saviour and redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. IV.

- “ 1. **W**HEN therefore the Lord knew
 “ how the Pharisees had heard
 “ that Jesus made and baptized more disci-
 “ ples than John,
 “ 2. (Though Jesus himself baptized
 “ not, but his disciples),
 “ 3. He left Judea, and departed again
 “ into Galilee.”

Bishop Beveridge observes, that many
 people, mistaking the texts which relate
 to baptism, have supposed it necessary that
 they should be perfectly instructed in the
 religion before they were baptized :
 also says that European translators render
 the words of the original text, “ Go
 “ and

"and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c.; but that it will bear no such sense: for that the word which they have translated "to teach" had no such signification, but means, 'to be, or to make disciples;' and that they were to be taught after they were baptized. This opinion seems confirmed by St. Matthew, chap. xxviii. ver. 19. 20.; "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Thus, says Beveridge, are all the texts upon this subject translated in the oriental versions: by which means the Eastern Churches have escaped this error.

The Seventy who are so often referred to in books of divinity, were wise men of Greece who translated the Scriptures into the Greek language; and, it may naturally be supposed, that their work was not published till it had been inspected

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and corrected by the whole body. With such advantages, it must have been an excellent translation; in which light it is considered by all the writers on divinity, and as a work highly beneficial to mankind.

“4. And he must needs go through
“Samaria.”

Before I proceed further with my comments upon this chapter, I propose (trusting to the indulgence of my reader) to give some account of the origin of the Samaritans, and of the hatred which subsisted between them and the Jews; an account which, as it is strictly connected with the present subject, will not, I hope, be thought either uninteresting or useless. For this purpose, I must carry my reader back to the prophecy of Isaiah, (II. Kings, chap. xx.) who foretels to the good King Hezekiah the circumstances which were to happen to his posterity, and the calamities to be brought on them by the Babylonians; and as some parts of the history of this king furnish

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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furnish admirable lessons against p
ostentation, I shall treat of it pret
at large.

"In those days, Hezekiah was f
" death; and the prophet Isaiah c
" said unto him, Thus saith the L
" thine house in order, for thou
" and not live. Then he turned
" to the wall and prayed unto th
" saying, I beseech thee, O Lord,
" ber how I have walked before
" truth and with a perfect heart, a
" done that which is good in th
" and Hezekiah wept sore."

The subsequent events will f
how much better it is to observe a
resignation to the will of the Al
than to wish for any alteration in
decrees; but it is a melancholy v
in our nature, that even some of
people are over-anxious for lo
instead of resting assured that w
time our all-wise and good Create
fit to summon us hence, is best
God had compassion on the wea

"shewed them all the house of his precious things. Then came the prophet Isaiah and said unto him, What said these men, and from whence came they? and he said, From a far country." He also confessed that he had shewed them all his treasures. Isaiah hearing this, replies, that all those treasures, and his people, should, for his foolish ostentation, be carried captives into Babylon.

And here let me guard you against the supposition that such a number of people, living at so great a distance of time, were to suffer punishment for the pride and vanity of Hezekiah: this was by no means the case, either in this or in the many instances given in the Old Testament, where, to superficial readers, it may appear that the people suffered for the faults of their rulers. Their punishments were drawn down on them by their own vices; and, in the instance before us, they were punished for their wickedness in turning from their God to the worship of idols; the Almighty making use of the Babylonians as
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the instrument of his vengeance, to point out more forcibly to Hezekiah the folly of his conduct. They would have been equally punished had these events never happened, tho' perhaps by other means; and Hezekiah would have been saved the pain of knowing the calamities which were to befall his posterity.

Hezekiah seemed very much pleased, that people at so great a distance from his kingdom should be anxious respecting his recovery : he appeared to take the honor to himself, instead of giving it to God : his joy was so great, that it for a time divested him of his prudence and policy, by laying such great temptations in their way. Here we have a striking proof how difficult it is even for the best people to conduct themselves with prudence and moderation, under great prosperity, particularly when uncommon honors and attentions are paid to them. May this serve as a warning to us to keep a strict watch over ourselves, when by the favor of the Almighty we are placed in such circumstances. Hezekiah

Hezekiah seems to have overlooked one probable reason which might have brought these ambassadors from so distant a country: namely, the return of the shadow on the dial ten degrees. This wonderful event could not have escaped the observation of the Babylonians, who were famous for their knowledge in astronomy; their curiosity was of course inflamed to learn by what power it had been produced, and to see the man for whom the course of nature had been suspended. Report had fixed the scene of this miracle to Judea; and with such objects of curiosity the length of the journey was not likely to be an impediment.

Hezekiah, whose mind was open to conviction, became sensible of his fault, the instant it was pointed out to him by Isaiah. "Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good if peace and truth be in my days?" He humbly submits to the justice of the sentence, knowing it to be deserved and sent

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as a punishment both for his own sins ~~and~~ those of his people. Nor did he *spea*k lightly or carelessly, as one unconcerned for his posterity; his piety, charity, and natural affection, forbid such a thought: he expressed the feelings of a grateful heart for the singular favor granted him, that judgment should not immediately follow his sin; and surely this required his speedy and humble acknowledgment.

The accomplishment of the punishment so denounced, is related by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. lii. ver. 9. "Then they
"took the king and carried him up unto
"the king of Babylon, to Riblah, in the
"land of Hameth, where he gave judg-
"ment."

God, who, as I have so frequently had occasion to observe, brings good out of evil, did it very conspicuously upon the present occasion, in making himself known to, and adored by, the Babylonians. In consequence of the wonderful acts performed in favor of certain Jews who refused to worship the Babylonish idol under Nebuchadnezzar,

both for his own friends and for the people. Nor did he fear to be thought of as one unconcerned; his piety, charity, and wisdom, forbid such a thought. The feelings of a grateful people for favor granted him, would not immediately have been forgotten. This required his personal acknowledgment.

ishment of the punishment related by the prophet in iii. ver. 9. "Then he carried him up to Babylon, to Riblah, in the land of Mesopotamia, where he gave judgment."

I have so frequently observed, brings good out of evil, conspicuously upon the Jews, in making himself known to the Babylonians, by his wonderful acts performed in the case of certain Jews who refused to worship the Babylonish idol under the name of buchadnezzar.

buchadnezzar, he passed the decree, (Daniel, chapter iii. "Therefore I make a decree, that no man of the people, nation, and language, shall speak any thing amiss against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: but he shall be cut in pieces, and their house shall be made a dunghill; because they refused to worship other god that can deliver after this manner."

After the expiration of seven years, in the first year of the reign of Darius the king of Persia (to which country Babylon was now become subject), he, by divine inspiration, ordered the Jews to re-build the Temple, commanding his subjects to assist them with whatever was requisite for that purpose. The decree with respect to Cyrus, which was made in the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, is one of the most remarkable in the world, as he is pointed out by name, or number, for seventy-six years before he happened.

Many of the Jews who were still in Babylon, did not choose to return.

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own country ; and those who did ~~return~~, found great difficulties in carrying on ~~the~~ work, being sometimes impeded, and ~~at~~ others totally stopped, by the malice and envy of their enemies ; in consequence of which, the Temple was not finished until the reign of Darius.

From hence we may learn, that the Almighty does not always permit our most laudable designs, of serving and rendering him honor, to be accomplished without interruption. He frequently sends disappointments, to exercise us in the virtues of patience and resignation : these can be perfected only in this world : in Heaven we can have no exercise for them ; that being a place of complete happiness, where we shall be rewarded for every act of obedience to God's laws.

Ezra gives us a very affecting account of the foundation of this second Temple, (chap. iii. ver. 12.) ; “ But many of the
 “ priests and chief of the fathers, who were
 “ ancient men that had seen the first house,
 “ when the foundation of this house was
 “ laid

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 difficulties in carrying on
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 .); "But many of the
 of the fathers, who were
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"laid before their eyes, wept with
 "voice, to see how inferior this was
 "former." Yet the prophet
 (chap. ii. ver. 9.) says, "The glory
 "latter house shall be greater than
 "former, says the Lord of Hosts; and
 "place will I give peace, says the
 "Hosts." That the latter Temple
 should be short of the former, in point of
 splendour, is universally allowed:
 comes it, then, that the glory of
 the Temple should so far exceed the
 former? Because the Son of God
 dwelt with his human as well as his di
 vine presence; and as he was the desire
 of all nations, but more particularly of the
 Jews, the place where he gave public in
 struction must have hence appeared most
 glorious to the believing Jews: the grandeur
 and magnificence of Solomon's Temple
 in their opinion appear as nothing in
 comparison of the inestimable blessing
 of being admitted into his presence, and
 hearing from his lips the words of eter
 nal life: their thoughts would be too
 much occupied with these things.

pied in the attainment of those *eternal* riches which fade not away, to regret the absence of wordly pomp and splendor.

When the Temple was completed, and the worship of God re-established on its ancient footing, the Jews were required to put away their strange wives ; the law of their God having expressly prohibited them from making marriages with the idolatrous nations ; nor could they be admitted into the Temple till they had complied with this, and every other ordinance of the law. This was certainly a severe test of their piety, and a punishment for having broken the law : but all who returned to their God with their whole heart, made this sacrifice ; putting away the strange wives which they had married whilst captives in Babylon. One of the sons of Jojada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballet, who had been very anxious to prevent the re-building of the Temple of Jerusalem. Family reasons might, probably, have urged him to this : he might apprehend that, if that
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took place, a public disgrace would fall upon some of his nearest and dearest connexions. Finding, at length, all his endeavors fruitless, he gave his son-in-law, whose name was Menasses, leave to build a Temple on Mount Gerezim, in Samaria, and made him high priest of it. Thither resorted all those priests, who having married strange wives refused to put them away; as well as all those who for their crimes had been expelled from the Temple, or forfeited the privileges of the priesthood, the city, or the court.

The conduct of the rulers of the Jews, at this time, in expelling so many of their brethren from their communion, should not be attributed to pride or prejudice: they appear to have been actuated by a high sense of respect to the honor of God, and of gratitude to him for re-admitting them to all their former invaluable privileges; which they could in no way so properly manifest, as by a strict observance of all his ordinances. How sadly they
had

had degenerated in our blessed Saviour's time, their conduct plainly evinces.

The worship of the Samaritans, as well as their system of morality, was greatly inferior to that of the Jews in its flatness and purity: they indulged themselves in many liberties which were forbidden by Jewish law.

From the above account, we may easily conceive, that great jealousy and enmity would naturally arise between the two people: and this appears to have been the case, and to have risen to such a height, in the time of our Saviour, that they seem to have avoided even the common office of humanity to each other.

Such were the people to whom our blessed Lord was graciously pleased to offer his divine gospel; and many of them thankfully accepted it, and became faithful followers and disciples.

“ 5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near
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erated in our blessed Saviour's conduct plainly evinces.

Friendship of the Samaritans, as a system of morality, was greater than that of the Jews in its time. They indulged themselves in practices which were forbidden by the law.

From the above account, we may see that great jealousy and enmity naturally arise between the two peoples. It appears to have been the case that they were risen to such a height, in their hatred to our Saviour, that they feared even the common offices of friendship between each other.

But the people to whom our Saviour was graciously pleased to come, in the gospel; and many of them accepted it, and became his followers and disciples.

When he cometh he to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the well of Jacob.

"the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

"6. Now Joseph's Well was the place where Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour."

The foregoing verse furnishes proof of our blessed Lord's submission to the infirmities of human nature, in presenting him as tired with his journey. Did he choose easy and expeditious ways of travelling, but such as best suited the station of life in which he condescended to appear. His whole life on earth was a continued state of suffering.

"7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."

"8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city, to buy meat.)"

This woman, we learn from the Gospel, had lived a very scandalous life.

does it appear that she had formed any plan of reformation, when she met and conversed with our Saviour. He soon brought her to a right way of thinking; and by implanting in her heart a firm faith in him, furnished her with the strongest shield against the temptation to return to her former wicked and dissolute life.

The Scribes and Pharisees continually reproached our Lord for associating with publicans and sinners. His answer to all such charges, is well worthy of remark: "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." How merciful, kind and condescending in our Saviour, not to refuse the very worst of sinners, upon their sincere repentance, faith and amendment of life. Had he kept such at a distance, and only admitted to his presence persons bearing a fair character in the world, how many of those who became the sincerest of his profelytes, must have been suffered to perish in their ignorance and vices!

In like manner, let us endeavor to bring back to the paths of virtue, our unhappy brethren;

brethren ; let them have strayed ever so far into those of vice, we should not be disheartened, or give up our attempts to save them, any more than we would the care of a sick friend, but still continue to administer the proper medicines ; since, whilst there is life, there is hope. How pleasing such conduct is to God, may be gathered from the greatness of the reward promised to such endeavors : “ Those who bring many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever.

“ 9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria ? (For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.)”

The surprize of the woman, that he should enter into conversation with her who was a Samaritan, much more ask a favor of her, is perfectly natural. She did not come there with the expectation of meeting the Messiah, but merely for the

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purpose

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purpose of drawing water at the public well ; there being no private ones amongst them, as with us : but it often happens that we are blessed with the divine mercies, when we think not of them. God is found of those who seek him not. This woman appears to have possessed a good disposition, though perverted by vicious courses, and to have been therefore thought by our Lord, to whom the secrets of the heart are open, a proper object of his mercy and regard.

“ 10. Jesus answered, and said unto her,
“ If thou knewest the gift of God, and
“ who it is that saith to thee, Give me
“ to drink, thou wouldest have asked of
“ him, and he would have given thee living
“ water.”

The holy Spirit is here called living water ; as it is constantly flowing in the hearts of those to whom it has been communicated, cleansing and reviving the soul. Had she known that it was the Messiah
who

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living water at the well, giving no private ones among the Jews; but it often happens that with the divine mercy, not of them. God who seek him not. To have possessed a gift, though perverted by vice, have been therefore those to whom the secrets of God are a proper object of blessing.

answered, and said unto him, Give me this gift of God, which thou hast said to thee, Give me, and thou wilt have given me living water.

It is here called living water, constantly flowing in the heart, to whom it has been communicated, and reviving the soul, that it was the Messiah who

who spoke to her, she would know that this first of blessings, every other, was at his command; would therefore most probably cited it of him.

"11. The woman saith unto him, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from hence then drawest thou that living water?"

This poor woman, still under the influence of our Saviour in a literal sense, might be surprized; but he spake figuratively, comparing his grace, holy spirit, and doctrine of his gospel, to living water. Therefore having the least conception of his meaning, and knowing the well was very deep, she naturally expressed her desire to be informed how he is to give her living water; and her curiosity being excited, is led to make inquiries concerning himself.

“ 12. Art thou greater than our father
 “ Jacob which gave us the well, and
 “ drank thereof himself, and his children,
 “ and his cattle?”

The Samaritans were always proud to own their relationships to the Jews, altho' the latter treated them upon all occasions with the greatest contempt.

“ 13. Jesus answered, and said unto her,
 “ Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall
 “ thirst again;

“ 14. But whosoever drinketh of the
 “ water that I shall give him, shall never
 “ thirst; but the water that I shall give him
 “ shall be in him a well of water, spring-
 “ ing up into everlasting life.

“ 15. The woman saith unto him, Sir,
 “ give me this water, that I thirst not, nei-
 “ ther come hither to draw.”

The woman, who seems not to have given the smallest credit to any thing our
 Saviour

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is greater than our faith
gave us the well, and
himself, and his children

is were always proud
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Saviour was saying to her, desires
derision, to give her that water, con-
sidering him as speaking literally
knowing that in the common use of
things he could not raise it from the bot-
tom of the well, without some other
draw it with.

" 16. Jesus saith unto her, Go
" husband, and come hither."

Our blessed Saviour might prob-
ably say this to check her presumption,
bring her to a sense of the sinfulness of
her conduct, and that she might be the more
receptive of the glad tidings of salvation
which he was about to publish to her.

" 17. The woman answered and
said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus
said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have
no husband ;

" 18. For thou hast had five husbands
and he whom thou now hast, is
not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly

Struck with surprize at the supernatural knowledge here displayed by our Saviour, she attempts no vindication to the charge made against her : her conscience bears testimony to its justice ; and, being touched with remorse, she appears not to wish to conceal her offences, but rather to be made fully sensible of them, as a necessary step to that penitence she now first resolved on.

“ 19. The woman saith unto him, Sir,
“ I perceive that thou art a prophet.”

She was well aware that no one without being inspired, could discover the secret actions of his fellow-creatures ; and therefore, instead of denying the crimes laid to her charge, and being angry at the person who charged her, she acknowledges them in silence, and seems only anxious to be rightly informed in her duty, that she might re-trace her wandering steps.

That the very best of us are guilty of great faults, our consciences, if permitted
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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

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" 20. Our fathers worshipped
" mountain ; and ye say, that is
" salem is the place where men o
" worship."

It is no less necessary for us, if
pire to the honor of being the chil
God by adoption and grace, to e
our lives and actions with his la
we may know upon what foundati
hope rests, than it was for this wo
learn who were right in their publ
ship, the Jews or the Samaritans.

“ 21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

“ 22. Ye worship, ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.”

Our Saviour, in the above reply, intimates to her, that God was about to put an end to both those places, and to abolish that form of worship; as, under the gospel dispensation, those severe ceremonies and ordinances which formed so great a part of the Jewish law, and which were in part observed by the Samaritans, would be unnecessary. He further tells her, that God had revealed his will to his own people, the Jews: directing them to worship him at Jerusalem; but that as for the Samaritans, their Temple, not having been ordained of the Almighty, it could not be supposed that their mode of worship was either so pure, or pleasing to him, as that honored by his own immediate sanction.

“ 23. But

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s faith unto her, When the hour cometh, where in this mountain, nor I, worship the Father. worship, ye know not what we worship: for the Jews."

ir, in the above reply, that God was about to visit those places, and to accept of worship; as, under the law, those severe ceremonies which formed so great a part of the Jewish law, and which were observed by the Samaritans, were to be abolished. He further tells them that he had revealed his will to his disciples: directing them to worship the Father in spirit and in truth; but that as for the Temple, not having been built by the Almighty, it could not be the place of their mode of worship, nor pleasing to him, as he had his own immediate sanction.

"23."

"23. But the hour cometh, and is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father, in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

"24. God is a Spirit; and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Those who depend upon mere ceremonies and appearances, and offer only lip worship, will find themselves miserably deceived in supposing they can by render an acceptable service. True worship pleasing to God, must be from the heart, and consist in sincere and reverent reverence, true faith, and universality.

"25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh which is Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things."

"26. Jesus saith unto her, I have said unto thee, am he."

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It is evident, from the conversation of this woman, that, though she had swerved so widely from the paths of virtue, *her* education had been much attended to, and that she still felt its influence. She retained a true and solid faith in the promise of the Messiah ; nor does she, after what she had seen of him, doubt that Jesus was the person, upon his declaring himself to be so.

It is one great advantage of a religious education, that although many who have been so happy as to receive it are not able to resist the temptations with which they are surrounded, but fall into vicious courses, yet so much of its influence generally remains, that, upon occasion of any remarkable occurrence which reminds them of their duty, such as a fit of sickness, or the loss of friends or fortune, they are sensible of their errors, and are ready to return to the right path ; whilst those who have the misfortune to have been neglected in this great article, generally fall from one vice to another, till they be-
come

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from the conversation
 , though she had seen
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come objects of wretchedness,
 themselves and to all with whom
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Would to God that parents and
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 care of youth, would seriously re
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 that they have nothing to acc
 selves of : they will be free from

demnation; which is, on every occasion,
the greatest trouble which can fall on us.

“ 27. And upon this came his disciples,
“ and marvelled that he talked with **the**
“ woman: yet no man said What seekest
“ thou? or why talkest thou with her?”

Though the disciples could not but have
been surprized to find their master en-
gaged in conversation with a woman of
Samaria, a thing forbidden by their Ra-
bis, yet so great was their respect and re-
verence towards him, that they suppressed
their curiosity, fearing probably that any
inquiry on the subject might seem to im-
ply a doubt of the propriety of his
conduct.

“ 28. The woman then left her water-
“ pot, and went her way into the city, and
“ faith to the men,

“ 29. Come, see a man which told me
“ all things that ever I did: is not this the
“ Christ?”

From

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which is, on every occasion, a trouble which can fall on

upon this came his disciples, and led that he talked with them. Yet no man said, What seest thou? Why talkest thou with her?

The disciples could not but be surprised to find their master in conversation with a woman, being forbidden by their Master's commandment that was their respect and shame to him, that they supposed, fearing probably that the subject might seem to be one of the propriety of

The woman then left her water-pot, and went into the city, and said to her brethren, I have seen a man which told me all that ever I did: is not this the

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From the proofs she now gives of prompt and zealous faith, and of eager joy which she expressed in going to fetch her countrymen, we conclude that she already had received living water, that pure spirit, which cleanses the soul, and renders the worst of men acceptable in the sight of God.

It is not, however, to suppose that a blessing will be granted but upon the most sincere repentance and resolution of amendment.

The account she gave to the disciples was so full of wonder, that they hastened to see the person whom she called to be the Messiah.

"30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

"31. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

"32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

"33. Therefore said the disc

“ to another, Hath any man brought
 “ ought to eat ?”

The Saviour of Mankind was more intent upon the great work of converting sinners, than on that of satisfying the cravings of appetite ; but his disciples did not understand him, but thought he was speaking of natural food. It was a long time before even the apostles themselves comprehended our Saviour, when he spoke to them of spiritual things ; and he frequently laments their ignorance, and hardness of belief. The assistance of God in opening and enlarging our understanding is necessary to the knowledge of his will ; nor will he refuse it to such as seek it faithfully.

“ 34. Jesus saith unto them, My Father
 “ to do the will of Him that sent me
 “ to finish his work.”

Our blessed Lord, without any reproach
 for their dulness of comprehension

2 having compassion on their infirmities and ignorance, endeavors to impress them with the idea that his work was to be constantly teaching the people, and that temporal concerns were never to be placed in competition with spiritual ones.

" 35. Say not ye there are yet four months and then cometh harvest? behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest."

Christ's harvest was spiritual : it was to gain souls. What a plentiful one did he reap soon after, amongst the Samaritans !

" 36. And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal ; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

If happiness is what we seek after, why will we not pursue the right path ? Is it to be found in this world of sorrow and pain ?

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pain? If worldly enjoyments are t
tent of our expectations, we may
find them; but shall, after all, be
in the object of our search. The i
tal soul is not to be satisfied with w
gratification, but requires a species o
pines more conformable to its own
tual nature; and this first of bless
in our own power; a blessing whi
world can neither give nor take
This consists in a conscience void
fence towards God and towards ma
which a steady performance of ou
will never fail to bestow.

“ 37. And herein is that saying
“ one soweth, and another reapeth.

“ 32. I sent you to reap that w
“ ye bestowed no labor: othe
“ labored, and ye are entered int
“ labors.”

The inhabitants of Canaan ha
formerly dispossessed of their coun
their wickedness, and the Almight

en it to his own people, the Jews, who
 ame possessed of the fruits of other
 n's labors. In like manner, our Sa-
 ur sends his apostles to reap the fruits
 still more glorious harvest; namely, a
 itual one, which they had not sowed.
 n the Baptist had prepared the minds
 the people to receive the doctrine of
 blessed Lord; who, also, during the
 ole of his life, employed himself in
 ing the good seed in their hearts, which
 apostles had the happiness of bringing
 perfection, and of establishing the Chris-
 a church, which they left at their deaths
 der the superintendence of successors
 o, after their example, would have sa-
 ficed their lives sooner than have given
 their faith.

"39. And many of the Samaritans of
 that city believed on him, for the say-
 ing of the woman, which testified, He
 told me all that ever I did.

"40. So when the Samaritans were
 come unto him, they besought him that

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" he

“ he would tarry with them : and he
“ abode there two days.

“ 41. And many more believed, because
“ of his own word ;

“ 42. And said unto the woman, Now
“ we believe, not because of thy saying :
“ for we have heard him ourselves, and
“ know that this is, indeed, the Christ, the
“ saviour of the world.”

I must not here omit to do justice to the humility of these Samaritans. How readily did they divest themselves of the prejudices which the treatment they received at the hands of the Jews must naturally have impressed them with ! They were equally the descendants of Abraham, and might, therefore, have expected the honor of having the Messiah spring from themselves, instead of finding him amongst their avowed enemies ; but this had no influence on their faith : they joyfully received and acknowledged him, though a Jew.

Our blessed Saviour in the parable of
the

the good Samaritan, endeavors to overcome that aversion which the Jews bore to their neighbours, the Samaritans, by describing one of them as greatly superior to some of those who styled themselves God's peculiar people. But they wanted the virtues of charity, humanity, and kindness, which so particularly marked the character described by our Saviour as acceptable in the sight of that Being who judges the heart and actions of his creatures. It was not the name of Jew under the Old Testament which availed; nor will that of Christian, under the new, avail, without a conduct correspondent to so high and exalted an honor.

The parable I have just alluded to, is so strikingly beautiful, and contains so much instruction, that I cannot pass it over without making a few observations upon it. Those who saw the poor sufferer, as they passed by him, wanted not the ability but the will to assist him; nor was it inattention that prevented them: both the priest and the Levite had the cruel cu-

riosity to go up and look at him ; which, by raising the hopes of the poor creature, added greatly to the savage barbarity of leaving him in so wretched a situation: but the good Samaritan, though the sufferer was his avowed enemy, immediately afforded him every assistance in his power. There are many people who will help the distressed, as far as a little superfluous money will do it ; perhaps, they will go further, and give part of that which would have conducted to their own comfort: and so far they are very commendable: but to be as benevolent as the great and good character here described, they must go further, and even submit to real and serious inconveniences, rather than leave their fellow-creatures in distress. Nor must this be done for their friends alone, but must be extended even to their enemies, by the sacrifice, if necessary, of part of those comforts which they had prepared for themselves ; and this not grudgingly, for “ God loveth a cheerful giver.” The good Samaritan did not think he had fulfilled

ed his duty, by the mere assistance of
moment, but took care to provide for
poor sufferer as long as his situation
ould render it necessary. Stanhope
s, our blessed Saviour is the good Sa-
ritan indeed, who found poor human
ure wounded and bruised, left more
in half dead, and stripped of all its va-
ble perfections, by the merciless robber
d adversary of souls; and when neither
Levitical law, nor the sacrifices offered
the Jewish priests, had administered any
t of comfort or relief, he came a stranger
m his blissful dwelling, kindly bound
our wounds, poured out his soul to the
ath, and applying the sovereign balsam
his own blood: he also took us up and
moved us away into a more saving dis-
nsation, clothed us with a robe, and
ought a perfect cure, at the expence of
ny miracles and mighty sufferings to
nself, and left us a constant supply of spi-
ual sustenance, which will continue with
as long as the world exists.

Christians,

Christians, who possess such great advantages over the Samaritans in point of religious worship, would do well strictly to examine themselves; and happy will those be who have no cause to blush on comparing their actions with those of the merciful Samaritan here described !

“ 43. Now after two days, he departed thence, and went into Galilee :

“ 44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.”

The want of respect experienced by our blessed Saviour, amongst those who knowing him best ought to have revered him most, proceeded from pride, which could not admit that a person in so inferior a station as that which our Saviour condescended to fill, could have a claim to attention. This is noticed in all the four gospels; which is not the case in every particular of our Saviour's life.

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

who possess such great advantages, in point of knowledge, would do well strictly to examine their lives; and happy will be the cause to blush on comparisons with those of the men here described!

After two days, he departed into Galilee:

as himself testified, that he had no honor in his own country.

Perfectly experienced by all amongst those who know him, he is thought to have been freed from pride, which is not the case of a person in so high a station, at which our Saviour himself, could have a claim. This is noticed in all the accounts of our Saviour's life.

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Different historians will vary in their relations, according to their different circumstances; some will be struck more forcibly by one circumstance, and some with another. Did any two writers ever relate the same fact, exactly in the same words: is no contradiction nor essential difference in their accounts, it forms a much stronger proof of their veracity, than if they differed in every trifling point. Our ideas are as variable as our features: had the evangelists therefore, all written exactly in the same terms, it would have given reason to suppose that the three last were mere copies, and consequently we should have been deprived of a great part of the satisfaction we now enjoy in the concurrent testimony of the four holy gospels.

Our own experience will corroborate the testimony of our Lord contained in the last verse. How often does a man with great talents strike our imagination, and draw from us the applause of our merits, when the same person, amongst us in a poor and low

would probably be neglected and despised! So it was with our blessed Saviour: he was followed and adored for his miracles every where, except in his own country, where they did not choose to acknowledge him, because he was, as they thought, the son of a carpenter, with whose family and situation they were well acquainted.

The same species of pride frequently prevents our improvement, by leading us to despise those who might be able to teach us. This shews a littleness of mind which we should carefully guard against; never losing the means of improvement, though we must be obliged for it to those whom the world may regard, in every other respect, as our inferiors.

“ 45. Then when he was come into
 “ Galilee, the Galileans received him,
 “ having seen all the things that he did
 “ at Jerusalem at the feast; for they also
 “ went unto the feast.

“ 46. So Jesus came again unto Cana
 “ of Galilee, where he made the water
 “ wine.

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

bably be neglected and despised with our blessed Saviour: and adored for his merits, except in his own country, did not choose to acknowledge he was, as they thought, a carpenter, with whose family they were well acquainted. The species of pride frequently hinders improvement, by leading those who might be able to improve. This shews a littleness of spirit, which should carefully guard against the means of improvement. We must be obliged for it to the world may regard, in comparison with our inferiors.

When he was come into Galilee, he received him, and shewed all the things that he had done at the feast; for they also were there at the feast. Jesus came again unto Cana, where he made the water wine.

“wine. And there was a certain man whose son was sick at Capernaum.”
 “47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.”

The astonishing miracle of being changed into wine, must have spread the fame of its author, and excited a hope in the multitude that they should see others likewise prosper. Men are at all times extremely fond of the marvellous, even when they have no interest in it but the indulgent curiosity: how much more than they expect to derive benefits from it.

After such a proof of our Lord's natural power, we cannot wonder if any one in distress should apply to him for relief. The suffering servant, though he placed a confidence in the efficacy of our Lord's interference, did not have thought it necessary for him

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vation of the child, that he should attend him in person. Our blessed Saviour does not immediately answer his petition with his usual kindness: from which we may suppose his faith not yet sufficiently confirmed; that worldly concerns were too strongly impressed on his mind, or that he prided himself too much on his rank, and that the miracle itself would have lost half its value had his request been granted immediately.

“ 48. Then said Jesus unto him, except “ ye see signs and wonders, ye will not “ believe.

“ 49. The nobleman saith unto him, “ Sir, come down, ere my child die.”

Not so intreated the humble Centurion, (as may be seen in St. Luke, chap. vii. ver. 1. to 10.); his faith was so firm, that he was persuaded a single word was sufficient from the Saviour of the world; he compares our Lord's power over nature to that which he himself exercised over
his

his soldiers, who, in the true spirit of military discipline, instantly executed whatever he commanded them. How differently were these two suppliants treated : the poor Centurion, too diffident to hope for so great an honor, was attended by our blessed Saviour in person ; whereas the nobleman was reprov'd for the weakness of his faith, with encouragement enough, however, to prevent despair.

“ 50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way ; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.”

Upon this comfortable assurance, the faith of the distressed father gains some strength ; and he goes away in the belief that the promise would be realized.

The favors of God are given with a bountiful hand ; and when we ask for temporal blessings, if we do it in humility and an entire resignation to his will, and the requests are in themselves proper, our

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prayers are not only frequently granted, but spiritual gifts are often added to them. The Saviour of Mankind did not let *this* poor sufferer leave him with the single blessing of hope, but granted him a beam of light to cheer his benighted soul.

“ 51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him saying, Thy son liveth.

“ 52. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him.

“ 53. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth. And himself believed, and his whole house.”

This was so wonderful an event, that the father of the restored child immediately owned that the person who was able to perform so great a miracle, could be no other than the Son of God. What a blessing to himself and his whole family
did

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d the sickness of his son prove, as it
rly brought them to the knowledge of,
id faith in, our blessed Saviour.

“ 54. This is again the second miracle
that Jesus did, when he was come out
of Judea into Galilee.”

Nothing could be better calculated to
repare the minds of the people to receive
e divine truths which our blessed Saviour
me to teach, than the performance of
iracles, which could not fail to impress
e highest respect for him, and to oblige
em, in spite of themselves, to regard
im as one sent from God.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. V.

“ 1. **A**FTER this there was a feast of
“ the Jews, and Jesus went up to
“ Jerusalem.”

Those public feasts formed a considerable part of the Jewish worship, and were observed with great solemnity. Our blessed Lord's constant and ready obedience to every ordinance of his father's law delivered by Moses, should induce us to be equally attentive to his institutions; particularly to that most sacred and heavenly feast, which he appointed to be observed by his disciples in the room of
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the Jewish passover, and which the oftener we approach, the greater will be our relish for the spiritual food afforded us at our Lord's table.

"2. Now there is at Jerusalem, by the
"sheep-market, a pool which is called,
"in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, hav-
"ing five porches.

"3. In these lay a great multitude of
"impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered,
"waiting for the moving of the water.

"4. For an angel went down at a cer-
"tain season into the pool, and troubled
"the water: whosoever then first after the
"troubling of the water stepped in, was
"made whole of whatsoever disease he
"had."

How often this power of healing hap-
pened, Scripture has not informed us. A learned divine, (Poole, in his Annotations,) observes, that we are not to suppose the angel appeared in any visible shape, but that the rolling and tumbling
of

of the water was a sure sign of its then and then only being medicinal: he also supposes that this water had not the power of healing, till a short time before the birth of our Saviour, and that it was a figure of his near approach.

To this may be referred the passage in the prophecy of Zacharias, chap. xiii. ver. 1.: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

The virtues of this pool certainly bore a great resemblance to the divine efficacy of our Lord's gospel, in that (contrary to the nature of common medicines, which though beneficial in one disorder may be fatal in another,) it cured all manner of disorders; but here the comparison must stop, as our blessed Saviour removes all the variety of diseases of the soul produced by sin, not only at stated periods, but at all times when we with true faith and humility apply to him as our divine physician.

" 5. And

"5. And a certain man was there which
"had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

"6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew
"that he had been now a long time in
"that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou
"be made whole?

"7. The impotent man answered him,
"Sir, I have no man, when the water is
"troubled, to put me into the pool :
"but while I am coming, another steppeth
"down before me."

This question of our Lord's did not proceed from any doubt of the poor man's desire to be made whole ; for who that is sick would not wish to be cured ? Besides, it was evident he came there with that hope : but it seems to have been asked, to give him an opportunity of relating his deplorable and helpless situation, and to draw from him his faith and hope in himself, that so being healed in the very instant that he was so pathetically describing his wretchedness (and a more wretched situation cannot be conceived,) he might feel

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the greater joy. This method was also the best calculated to ensure the attention of the spectators to the miracle he was about to perform, and to impress it in the strongest manner on their minds. His description of his sufferings, of his hopes, and of his continual disappointments, would of course excite their pity and compassion, and they must have thought his case hopeless; as all who went there were too eager to secure the blessing to themselves, to stand upon ceremony, or even to give place to their dearest friend. Having thus prepared the minds of the spectators,

“ 8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk.

“ 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.”

By this wonderful operation of his power, our blessed Lord must have convinced this poor man at least, and one would

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ter joy. This method was calculated to ensure the attention of the spectators to the miracle he was performing, and to impress it in the memory on their minds. His description of his sufferings, of his hopes, and of his disappointments, would excite their pity and compassion. They must have thought his case like that of a man who went there were too many to receive the blessing to themselves. It was a ceremony, or even to give to his dearest friend. Having thus engaged the minds of the spectators,

he gave faith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

He immediately the man rose up, and took up his bed, and walked on the same day was made.

The wonderful operation of his power must have been evident to every man at least, and our words

would suppose all those who were present that the water and the angel derived their virtue from himself.

The Jews pretended to observe the sabbath with great strictness, and punished any one who carried his burden on that day. In the instance before us, the Saviour seems determined to prove to them that he was the Lord of the sabbath. On another occasion also similar to this, he asked them, if they would not take their ass out of a pit on the sabbath. The inference was too plain to be misunderstood: for surely if motives of compassion or the better ones of relieving the suffering of creation from sufferings, would justify laboring on the sabbath, how much more the deliverance of a fellow-creature. On this question they were silent, as they could not deny the superiority of the motives of charity, humanity and benevolence to the observance of ceremonious rites, which were sacred. When we see our blessed Saviour thus condescending to explain the motives of his conduct, should it not teach

it is not enough merely that we act right, but that it is a duty we owe to society, to endeavor to point out the reasons of our actions to those who may judge differently from them.

What joy could be superior to that of this poor man, who from the lowest state of hopeless misery was in a moment restored to perfect health ! This is a happiness we can all better conceive than express.

Those who experience great afflictions, and fear there is no deliverance for them, because it does not attend their immediate call, need not go thus far back for instances of divine mercy ; as in the course of their lives they must have had frequent opportunities of observing the exercise of it, both in regard to themselves and others, though not perhaps in circumstances exactly similar to those of this poor man. The mercies of the Almighty are as infinite as his power. Let not man then presume to mistrust that glorious attribute upon which alone all his hopes of happiness are built !

“ 10. The

" 10. The Jews therefore said unto him
" that was cured, It is the sabbath-day : it
" is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

" 11. He answered them, He that made
" me whole, the same said unto me, Take
" up thy bed and walk.

" 12. Then asked they him, What man
" is that which said unto thee, take up thy
" bed and walk ?

" 13. And he that was healed wist not
" who it was : for Jesus had conveyed
" himself away ; a multitude being in that
" place."

When the Jews told the man the unlawfulness of the act of carrying his bed, and were inquisitive to know the person who gave him such an unjustifiable liberty, as they termed it, the man returned a very striking answer, and such as would at once have silenced their murmurs, had not their minds been over-clouded with error and darkness : had it not been for their obstinacy and perverseness they must, in the author of such a miracle, have perceived
and

and acknowledged their expected Messiah, and have worshipped, instead of reproaching and persecuting him.

“ 14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the Temple, and said unto him, Behold thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

That the Almighty does frequently send down his judgments on offending mortals, in the form of sickness, the loss of wealth, of station, or the still greater trial in the deprivation of friends or children, we learn from authors both sacred and profane. Sometimes indeed they seem intended merely to perfect us in the virtues of patience and resignation ; at others, for the gracious purpose of withdrawing us from the paths of vice, by calling us to reflection. In the first book of Kings (chap. xvii. verse 18.), we find the hospitable widow who received the prophet Elijah, addressing herself to him in these words :
 “ What have I to do with thee, O thou
 “ man

“man of God? Art thou come unto me
 “to call my sins to remembrance, and to
 “slay my sin?”

Thus the Almighty dealt with David; who, by humbling himself before the Lord and truly and sincerely repenting him of his sins, received a gracious pardon, and was restored to the favor of his God. Neither was the sorrow he expressed for the sickness of the child, and his apprehension for its life, displeasing to God. We are not commanded to overcome our feelings, but only to keep them within the bounds of reason.

It might have been expected from the excessive love which David bore his child, that he never would have taken comfort, nor been able to survive it; and this is a feeling which we are too apt to indulge upon so melancholy an occasion; not considering that the hand which smote, both can and will, if we receive the judgment as we ought, support us under our sufferings, and in time heal our wounded minds.

“ 15. The

“ 15. The man departed, and told the
 “ Jews, that it was Jesus which had made
 “ him whole.

“ 16. And therefore did the Jews per-
 “ secute Jesus, and sought to slay him, be-
 “ cause he had done these things on the
 “ sabbath-day.”

The seventh day God rested from his work of creation, which he therefore set apart and ordained to be kept holy throughout all future times. We are not to suppose, from this expression, that God is subject to such frailties as are attendant upon us ; that he could not be wearied, or that he required a length of time to perform the work of creation in : he could have produced the whole by a single word, in like manner as he is so beautifully described creating light : “ Let there be light, and there was light.” These and similar expressions which we meet with in scripture, as that “ God was angry ;” that “ he repented,” &c. are only employed to suit our confined capacities : how could
 human

ian ideas reach the inscrutable ways of infinite and spiritual being.

The advantages of the institution of the church, both in a religious and temporal sense, are too evident to require much discussion; I shall therefore only briefly touch on them. So prone are mankind to forget the benefits they receive, and to sacrifice their worldly interests to swallow up every other consideration, that, I am persuaded, it is to this institution, (which by suspension of their daily occupations, allows the thoughts of men to sublime imaginations) we are indebted for the little portion which remains in the world: this being set apart for the express purpose of worship, and proper places appropriated for the performance of it in every civilized country, as well as persons appointed to instruct and assist us in the manner of it, it is impossible it should be overlooked. Its advantages, in a temporal light, are numerous: amongst others, it gives a respite to the labours of those who are obliged to pro-

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vide for themselves and families by their own exertions, without which it would be in itself impossible for them to continue their necessary labors; it is a day in which they have not only the advantage of being instructed in those points which distinguish them from the inferior creation, but in which they have the opportunity of enjoying the cheerful and innocent society of their families; which, constant labor and consequent fatigue, on other days, scarcely render possible. And here I cannot help calling your attention to the wonderful goodness of our God! who makes our duty and true interest inseparable: this is evident in all the Commandments, and in every ordinance and prohibition of our religion; but in none more so, than in that we are now considering.

To a strict observance of the sabbath, we are called by every thing we hold binding:—it is our duty to God, to ourselves, and to mankind in general. Let us not, however, mistake the mode of honoring it, and suppose, as some do, that

it

is to be passed in melancholy, gloominess, or total indolence; or, like the Jews, that it was to be spent in mere ceremonial observances, and that even the great duties of charity, mercy, and humanity, are not to be practised on that day: for God would never give a precept so contrary to the whole tenor of his revealed will; so far from it, that he, upon all occasions, commands us to let mercy take place of sacrifice.

Let it not be understood from this, that I would encourage a careless mode of observing the sabbath: this is, by no means, my intention: on the contrary, I disapprove of the light in which it is considered by many people rather as a day of festivity, than as a holy-day entirely dedicated to the service of our Creator, and to the improvement of our minds in the knowledge of his will: and, finally, we ought not to grudge such a portion of our time to him from whom we derive every blessing we possess, even when we have no interest in it ourselves; how

much more, then, when it has for its object our present and future welfare!

How, indeed, can a truly-pious Christian pass the day with more delight, than in the manner which he knows will render him acceptable to the Almighty for the sake of his Saviour; with what regret must he reflect on those which he has past improperly, or carelessly, under the pretence of business or pleasure; for many there are who contend, that when the duty of the day is over, any innocent amusements or recreations are allowable: this is in my opinion, a very dangerous doctrine; because I conceive the duty of the day ends but with the day. Hear what Isaiah, under the influence of inspiration, says on this subject, (chap. lviii. ver. 13. 14.)

“ If thou turn thy foot from the sabbath,
 “ from doing thy pleasure on my holy
 “ day, and call the sabbath a delight, the
 “ holy of the Lord, honorable, and shalt
 “ honor him, not doing thine own ways,
 “ nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speak-
 “ ing thine own words, then shalt thou de-
 “ light

"light thyself in the Lord, and I will
 "cause thee to ride upon the high places
 "of the earth, and feed thee with the
 "heritage of Jacob thy father; for the
 "mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."
 The Almighty himself, also speaking in
 his own person, says: "Remember the
 "sabbath-day to keep it holy."

He does not specify one part of it more
 than another; nor has he made any differ-
 ence between the length of that and the
 other six days. The laborer is expected
 to work a certain portion of time allotted;
 and though he should be ever so indus-
 trious in the morning, that does not excuse
 him for the rest of the day: are we not,
 then, ashamed to refuse that obedience to
 the commands of our God, which we re-
 quire from our fellow-creatures? Besides,
 amusements which are very innocent at
 one time, become the reverse at another;
 for whatever good impressions the mind
 may have received in the former part of
 the day, are very apt to be effaced by
 those innocent amusements as they are
 termed,

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termed, the attention taken off from every thing serious, and the good seed which has been sown prevented from taking root in our hearts. Amongst the number of those who become victims to the laws of their country, the great majority will acknowledge, that the neglect of the Lord's-day was the first and principal cause of their wretched and untimely end. A sabbath-breaker is, at all times, in danger of being overcome by temptation, and of falling into the greatest vices ; and though they are not always such as may render them punishable by human laws, yet they may be equally pernicious to society and offensive to the Deity.

“ 17. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

“ 18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God.”

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ne victims to the laws of the
he great majority will admit
t the neglect of the Lord's
t and principal cause of the
nd untimely end. A sabbath
at all times, in danger of being
y temptation, and of falling
atest vices; and though the
rys such as may render the
y human laws, yet they are
ernicious to society and the
eity.

Jesus answered them, he
seth hitherto, and I work
efore the Jews sought to
him, because he not only
the sabbath, but said as
his father, making himself
od."

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The Jews plainly understood
Lord did not call God his father
same sense that they did, but
upon this occasion, meant to po-
out as the true and only Son
being one with him, and ascribing
self also a co-operation with the
his works. Upon this ground,
they sought to put him to death
blasphemer.

"19. Then answered Jesus,
"unto them, Verily, verily, I
"you, the Son can do nothing
"self, but what he seeth the
"do; for what things soever
"these also doeth the Son likewise.
"20. For the Father loveth
"and sheweth him all things that
"doeth; and he will shew his
"works than these, that ye may

The Jews, who were constant
witnesses of our blessed Saviour's

could not have mistaken him, had they made use of their unprejudiced reason; but, instead of this, it was with the utmost reluctance they could be brought to acknowledge them: forced, however, to do so, they were always ready to impute them to other causes; and their marvelling, which they could not avoid, so far from producing its proper effect, served only as a stumbling-block to them, by depriving them of their only cloak for their unbelief.

“ 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”

The prophets, whose acts are recorded in the Old Testament, sometimes raised the dead, as well as healed the sick; but they were only the instruments which the Almighty made use of: whereas our blessed Saviour did these mighty works by his own power and authority.

“ 22. For

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we mistaken him, had we
their unprejudiced minds
his, it was with the same
could be brought to pass
: forced, however, and
ways ready to impute
; and their marvels
ould not avoid, so far
proper effect, served as
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their only cloak for the

the Father raiseth up
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whose acts are recom-
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uthority.

" 22. fr

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" 22. For the Father judgeth
" but hath committed all judgme
" the Son :

" 23. That all men should ho
" Son, even as they honor the
" He that honoreth not the Son, h
" not the Father which hath sent h

One would think that the fo-
verses must strike even the most
and unthinking, with the utmost
spect, and reverence, for Jesus Chr

How wonderfully good and g-
was God the Father, in appointing
be our Judge! He that felt all our
nesses and infirmities, and who lai
his life for our sakes, will make
allowance which the circumstances
case will admit; but will at the far
expose the hypocrites who only ou
obey the law of God, making it
to impose upon their fellow-creatu

The first principle of all our
should be a desire to please Go
without such motive, be the acti

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so good in itself, we cannot expect to reap any benefit from it, but what the world can bestow : and when we consider how transitory are all its enjoyments, we shall find we have made a bad bargain.

“ 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he
“ that heareth my word, and believeth on
“ him that sent me, hath everlasting life,
“ and shall not come into condemnation ;
“ but is passed from death unto life.

“ 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the
“ hour is coming, and now is, when the
“ dead shall hear the voice of the Son of
“ God : and they that hear shall live.”

Many divines think, that our Saviour, by this first resurrection, meant those who heard his voice, and joyfully accepted his gospel, with a firm resolution to love, honor, and obey him. Before their conversion, they were dead in trespasses and sin ; but no sooner did they hear his voice, than they became his disciples : this was a resurrection from the death of
fin

fin to a life of grace here, which would prepare them for a life of glory hereafter.

"26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ;

"27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the son of man."

He had power to give, or to take life : inherent power in himself ; which no created being was ever so absurd as to pretend to.

"28. Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ;

"29. They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

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We are not to suppose, from this passage, that our best performances would be able to procure us the kingdom of Heaven: this is a privilege which became forfeited at the fall, and which is restored to us solely through the merits, and for the sake of our blessed Saviour: a privilege which we shall again lose, except we obey his commands.

This most awful subject of the last day is more fully treated of in the twenty-first chapter of St. Matthew, from the thirtieth verse; there our blessed Lord describes the human race as divided into two separate multitudes, according as they had done good or evil; the one he places on his right hand, the other on his left. To the former he says: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungry and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye covered me;"

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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"thed me: I was sick, and ye vis
"I was in prison, and ye came u
Let us consider, of whom were th
titudes to consist? Our Saviour
"Of all nations:" they must
be of all ranks and stations; hi
low, rich, and many that have
bread to eat. From whence, the
they feed the hungry, clothe th
&c.? By having the heart and di
to do it, and by feeling the woe
they could not relieve in the man
wished. God, who knows the h
cepts the will, though we may
the power of carrying it into actio

The widow's mite was more
able than the large contribution
wealthy. There are very few, i
any, situations in life, where a cl
disposition may not be, in some
other, of use and comfort to our
fellow-creatures. The poor are
to think, that they have nothing to
charity; generally supposing thi
five virtue confined solely to alm

which, however meritorious in itself, *and* incumbent on those whom God has blessed with the power, is only a twig of that luxuriant tree. St. Paul has so beautifully and so fully explained the meaning of the word "charity," that all who will read with attention the thirteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, will find themselves included in the duties of it. Whether high, or low, rich, or poor, every situation equally requires the attainment of those divine virtues.

The reply of the righteous, in the subsequent verses, is well worthy of attention, not only as it abounds with true humility, but shews that an upright and ingenuous spirit will not arrogate to itself undeserved merit : " Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? Or when saw we thee sick and in prison, and came unto thee ? "

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

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when saw we thee an hundred
thee? or thirty, and yet

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took thee in? or maintained
thee? Or when saw we thee
in prison, and came to

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Their Judge, with that kind
benignity which might be expected
him who had laid down his life for
them, answers: "Verily, I say unto
you, inasmuch as ye have done it
unto one of these my brethren,
ye have done it unto me."

Many good people have distressed
themselves when they have considered
the conduct of those blessed Martyrs, who
valiantly overcame the severest trials
for the honor of their Lord and
laying down their lives for his salvation.
Many have alarmed themselves with ap-
prehensions that their own conduct on so
important an occasion, would have been very
different, and that they would not have attained
that fortitude and perseverance
which they so much admire in the Martyrs.
Such humble and well-meaning,
timid Christians, how comfortable
a prospect here held out! Can there be
this, doubt that their faithful efforts,
though imperfect, will be accepted,
that if they strive to do their duty

state of life to which the Almighty called them, they have no reason to alarm themselves, but may rest assured that their pious wishes would have been accepted and that they would have been enabled by the grace of God, to fulfil any other duties he had thought proper to lay upon them?

The remainder of the chapter which contains the denunciation of the wrath of their Judge against those on his left hand or the wicked, is exactly the reverse of what I have just related: it leads us to meditate upon the wretchedness of those who may bring themselves to so dread a state, that even the infinite mercy of their Judge cannot consistently with justice, save them from that punishment which they have wilfully drawn on themselves. May the God of Mercy impress these considerations so deeply on their hearts, that it may deter them from acts of impiety, and induce them to steady perseverance in the great duties of religion, that, when that great and aw

day shall come, they may be found amongst the number of those on the right hand of their blessed Saviour, and be admitted to his glorious kingdom !

“30. I can of mine ownself do nothing :
“as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is
“just ; because I seek not mine own will,
“but the will of the Father which hath
“sent me.”

With what humility does the Saviour of the world declare his commission ! For though he undertook it voluntarily ; tho’ he was one with the Father, and might have claimed the honor due to such glorious actions, he declines it for the present : his hour was not yet arrived when he should receive all power, honor and adoration from men and angels !

“31. If I bear witness of myself, my
“witness is not true.

“32. There is another that beareth
F f “ witness

“ witness of me ; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me, is true.”

Our Saviour here argues, that had he possessed no other claim to their faith in him, than his own mere declaration, that he might have been justified in doubting him ; but he had another witness, whose truth could not be doubted ; namely God the Father ; who gave testimony to him at his baptism, at his transfiguration, and by his miracles.

“ 33. Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness unto the truth.

“ 34. But I receive not testimony from any man : but these things I say, that all men might be saved.

“ 35. He was a burning and a shining light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.”

Our Lord goes on to put them in mind of the testimony of John ; whom they had received

received at first favorably, and who, upon their inquiring concerning him, had expressly pointed him out as the long-expected Messiah that should come into the world; but declares that, although in compassion to their infirmities and with the hope of bringing them to salvation he appealed to human evidence, his testimony was of a much higher nature.

“36. But I have greater witness than
“that of John: for the works which the
“Father hath given me to finish, the same
“works that I do, bear witness of me,
“that the Father hath sent me.

“37. And the Father himself, which
“hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.
“Ye have neither heard his voice at any
“time, nor seen his shape.

“38. And ye have not his word abide-
“ing in you: for whom he hath sent,
“him ye believe not.”

Besides the testimony given of him by
the Father, in the instances before-men-
F f 2 tioned,

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tioned, the miraculous works which he did, loudly proclaimed his truth; and nothing less than the pride and obstinacy of the Jews, could have withheld their assent from such evident proofs. The work given him by the Father to finish, were to publish the gospel of peace and good-will towards men, and to beat down the partition-wall; that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, might be admitted into the Catholic or Universal Church.

When God appeared upon mount Sinai the children of Israel were terrified: "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."—(Exodus chap. xx. ver. 19.) The Jews had not the same excuse to plead, respecting our Saviour: so far were they from fearing him that, blinded by prejudice, they not only denied, in opposition to the clearest evidence, that he was the Messiah whom the prophets foretold should come into the world, but frequently derided him and his pretensions: they neither saw God, nor
heard

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timed his truth; and
the pride and obstinacy
have withheld them
it proofs. The
Father to finish, was
of peace and good-
will to beat down the
the Gentiles, as we
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were terrified. "Ho-
sanna, Speak thou
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The Jews had not
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heard his voice, though he dwelt
them; for had they known he
would have known the Father and

"39. Search the Scriptures
"them ye think ye have eternal
"they are they which testify of me"

What an unanswerable referen-
believers! The Scriptures were
guides that the Jews had to point
Messiah; and they plainly proved
Christ to be the person: there were
parts, however, which did not
taste; such as those in the fifty-third
chapter of Isaiah, where he is described
"a man of sorrow and acquainted
"grief;" as "despised and rejected
"men." These, and similar passages
were truly characteristic of our
they chose to overlook; attending
such parts as, by the false construction
spiritual glory into temporal po-
rule, flattered their vanity; and we

lowly situation of our Lord by no fulfilled.

One great reason, says Stanhope, many who read the scripture history much, make improvement by no answerable to their time and pains, is certainly this; that men usually content themselves with a general knowledge of related there, without descending to circumstances and the manner of performing them, whereas here it is chiefly the beauty and advantage of history these, rightly judged and aptly applied are the parts best qualified to inform understanding, and to season all our conversation with prudence and all our behaviour with propriety.

“40. And ye will not come to me
“ye might have life.”

Strange folly! to reject, by their disbelief in him, the great salvation! Let us, we pity their stupidity, take care to

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of our Lord by no

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 their time and pains
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we will not come to me,
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against the like perverseness; for
 not obey his laws, we equally reject

" 41. I receive not honour from

" 42. But I know you, that ye
 the love of God in you.

" 43. I am come in my Father
 and ye receive me not: if anot
 come in his own name, him ye
 ceive.

" 44. How can ye believe, w
 ceive honour one of another,
 not the honour that cometh fr
 only?"

They pretended to love an
 God; but the Searcher of hearts
 proves them for their hypocrisy
 receiving honor from men of wh
 were totally unworthy. The ma
 piety is truly humble, and rejoice
 honor which is paid to God:
 whom he is ever ready to ascribe

They honored each other for
 pose of imposing on the world:

they could have a regard for their companions in deceit; for there is no true friendship in vice: religion and virtue are its only foundations. Our blessed Saviour taught doctrines which they did not choose to follow: his divine gospel was of a nature too pure and refined to suit their conduct; for which reason, they rejected both him and the Christian religion. An impostor who should come in his own name, would be much more likely, as our Saviour observes, to find credit with them: he would find it his interest to indulge them in, or at least to wink at, many of their favorite vices; and would, consequently, acquire numerous proselytes amongst them. We find this observation fully verified in the Jewish history; where many pretenders to the character of the Messiah are related to have started up, and to have been zealously followed by the people.

“45. Do not think that I will accuse
 “you to the Father: there is one that
 “accuseth

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"accusest you; even Moses, in
"ye trust.

"46. For had ye believed Mo
"would have believed me; for h
"of me. But if ye believe not hi
"ings, how shall ye believe my wo

How does the clemency and be
of our Lord here display itself! It
from him, ill as they had used hi
they were to fear accusation; bu
Moses; that prophet upon whor
whole faith and trust were built
writings so fully pointed to our
Lord, that they were a constant
ment of the folly of the Jews in c
him, and clearly proved that the
fessions of belief in him were me
perfidious; otherwise they would h
tended to him, in a matter of the
importance to their salvation; and
then have found, that his predict
pecting the Messiah, were con
verified in the person of Jesus
but they wanted that humility and

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ness for which Moses was so confident to be in reality his disciples.

Thus we see, that the Jews, in their pride and obstinacy, lost that inestimable privilege which, as the chosen people of God, they enjoyed above all other nations in being the depositaries of the will of the Almighty, and suffering the Gentile world to step before them in the race of faith in that blessed Redeemer, whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed.

Let us endeavor to profit by their example, and shun every species of pride and arrogance: let us diligently study the Scriptures, for in them we have the words of eternal life; and let us petition the Father of Mercies, that the sacred truths they contain, and which are the delight of a pious mind, may be made deep into our hearts; that each successful perusal of them may be attended with additional spiritual gifts, and bring us the fruits of good-living, to his praise and glory, and to the salvation of

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souls. Grant this, merciful Lord, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. VI.

“ 1. **A**FTER these things, Jesus
“ over the sea of Galilee, w
“ is the sea of Tiberias.

“ 2. And a great multitude follo
“ him ; because they saw his mira
“ which he did on them that were
“ eated.”

Any uncommon character necess
attracts attention : when, therefore,
blessed Saviour appeared, and not
did wonderful works, but made then

is joined to curiosity, they will surmount all difficulties.

"3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

"4. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

"5. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

"6. (And this he said to prove him : for he himself knew what he would do.)"

The other three Evangelists mention the disciples coming to our Lord, to beg he would send the multitude away. How astonished, then, must they have been, when he said, "Give ye them to eat." Yet why should he, who cured all manner of disorders, be supposed to want the power to feed those he had so miraculously restored to health? But the disciples were still wavering in their faith.

"7. Philip

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“ 7. Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

“ 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon-Peter’s brother, saith unto him,

“ 9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

“ 10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

“ 11. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.”

Here let me call your attention to the conduct of our Lord, in a point which, I am afraid, is too frequently neglected. Although exercising the power of his godhead, in creating food, yet would he not omit

omit the duty which, in his human nature, he owed to God the Father for the blessing. The Son of God descended from Heaven, to be our pattern, as well as our saviour. Can any Christian, then, hope to be excused, who presumes to sit down to table without begging a blessing upon the provision which the Almighty bestows upon him?

Nothing is more deservingly held in abhorrence, than ingratitude: and shall we not thankfully acknowledge our constant obligations to our kind and generous Benefactor? But there are still further advantages attending our begging God's blessing upon the good things he has been pleased to provide for us: we all know that intemperance will convert the most wholesome nourishment, either of eating or drinking, into poison; and nothing is more likely to check our inordinate appetites, and to make us moderate in the use of God's blessings, than the pious recollection and acknowledgment, that to him we are indebted for them.

The

The miracle of multiplying food, w not, in reality, more wonderful than t manner in which God daily supplies u millions are constantly fed, in a way r less miraculous; but as this happens r gularly, it does not make the same awf impression upon our minds. What ca be more wonderful than the productio of grain? The Almighty, who has be pleased to feed us by the growth of co and the production of animals, mig equally have supported us without o own labor; but here we have a fresh stance of eternal wisdom, for making a industry of man necessary in supplyi him with the requisites of life: for mu of wickedness as we now see in the wor how greatly would it be increased if eve thing were provided for us without a exertions of our own; industry being (Stanhope very justly observes in his com ment upon this miracle) a great check t vice.

“ 12. Wh

“ 12. When they were filled, he said
 “ unto his disciples, Gather up the frag-
 “ ments that remain, that nothing be lost.

“ 13. Therefore they gathered them to-
 “ gether, and filled twelve baskets with the
 “ fragments of the five barley loaves,
 “ which remained over and above unto
 “ them that had eaten.”

In the foregoing verses, we are not only furnished with a new and striking proof of the greatness of the miracle that, after the hunger of five thousand persons had been satisfied, the fragments which remained exceeded the original quantity of bread produced, but likewise with a fine lesson to every one in their different stations, not to suffer waste : the heads of families, who, either through indolence or the want of proper attention to the conduct of their servants, permit such species of extravagance, are highly blamable : it is in a manner robbing the poor ; as it prevents their receiving those comforts which a prudent management would have enabled

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the unthinking possessor of the goods of fortune to have communicated to them, without expence to himself; or even which, if expensive, he would joyfully bestow on them, were he not prevented by finding his fortune, thro' mismanagement, barely adequate to his own expences.

“ 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, “ This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

“ 15. When Jesus, therefore, perceived “ that they would come and take him by “ force to make him a king, he departed “ again into a mountain himself alone.”

The Jews were always ready for sedition and rebellion, laying in wait for an opportunity to throw off the Roman yoke; and their mistake respecting the character of the Messiah, that he was to appear as a temporal prince, made even the best-meaning amongst them suppose
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by extraordinary character to be their promised deliverer. No wonder, then, that such a miracle should unite them in one wish, to choose Jesus for their king.

The example of frequent retirement, set us by our blessed Saviour, should be carefully followed: reflection is the food of the soul. In solitude we recal our wandering thoughts from the follies of the world, to employ them in meditating upon the goodness of God, and on the happiness that is reserved for us, if we do not forfeit it through our own negligence or guilt; and such reflections will be our best support against the temptations, as well as under the troubles, of the world.

“ 16. And when even was now come,
“ his disciples went down unto the sea,

“ 17. And entered into a ship, and
“ went over the sea towards Capernaum:
“ and it was now dark, and Jesus was not
“ come to them.

“ 18. And the sea arose, by reason of a
“ great wind that blew.

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“ 19. So

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“ 19. So when they had rowed about
“ five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they
“ see Jesus walking on the sea, and draw-
“ ing nigh unto the ship : and they were
“ afraid.

“ 20. But he saith unto them, It is I ;
“ be not afraid.

“ 21. Then they willingly received him
“ into the ship : and immediately the ship
“ was at the land whither they went.”

His disciples, who were the constant witnesses of the miracles which he performed, should, in all dangers and difficulties, have depended implicitly upon him ; and he therefore reproveth them, upon this occasion, for their want of confidence in him. It is one of our greatest comforts, that the sins, weaknesses, and infirmities of the first characters in Scripture are recorded : had they been omitted, and nothing but their good actions related, what would have become of us poor, insignificant, and frail creatures ! we must have been lost in despair ; but from their
example

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ple, and the pardon they received, are encouraged to struggle with the vigor after every relapse from virtue in the hope of finally conquering the enemy of our souls.

22. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side the sea saw that there was none other there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus sat not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone ;

23 (Howbeit there came other boats near Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread. after that the Lord had given thanks ;)”

cannot pass over this last verse, without pointing out to your notice, the repetition of the circumstance of our Lord's giving thanks ; which appears, evidently, intended to impress the duty strongly on our minds.

“ 24. When

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“ 24. When the people, therefore, saw
“ that Jesus was not there, neither his disci-
“ ples, they also took shipping and came
“ to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

“ 25. And when they had found him
“ on the other side of the sea, they said
“ unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou
“ hither?

“ 26. Jesus answered them and said,
“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek
“ me, not because ye saw the miracles,
“ but because ye did eat of the loaves, and
“ were filled.

“ 27. Labour not for the meat which
“ perisheth, but for that meat which en-
“ dureth unto everlasting life, which the
“ Son of man shall give unto you : for him
“ hath God the Father sealed.”

Had a right motive been the cause of
their following Jesus, how commendable
would their zeal have appeared ! In
their conduct, we may see our own, when
we take undue pains and spend too much
time and labor for the perishable things
of

LIFE AND DEATH OF

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

When the people, therefore, was not there, neither had they also took shipping and return, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me because ye saw the miracles, which I did at Nazareth: ye did eat of the loaves which I gave you, and were filled.

But he answered them, saying, I am not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Father shall give unto you: for the bread which I have given you, is not from mine own, but from the Father, who hath sealed it.

And this is the Father, who hath sealed it. And the people answered him, saying, What dost thou say? Jesus, how comest thou, when thou sayest, that the Father hath sealed it? We may see our own faces, and thou sayest, that the Father hath sealed it? For the perishing of the

of this life: From the rebuke given them by our Saviour, it is plain that their object was merely selfish. We are, however, to understand from the text, that it is improper to provide the necessaries of this life: on the contrary, it is enjoined us, as a duty, to provide not only for our own support, but for the support of those whom the Almighty hath intrusted in a particular manner to our care: all that seems to be meant is, that we are not to pursue worldly matters with such earnestness, as to make us neglect our superior duties. In their anxiety to get the things of this world, to the total neglectfulness of the other, they acted like the unjust steward represented by our Lord in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. A parable which contains so much instruction on the subject now before us, shall go a little aside to make a few remarks upon it.

Our Saviour describes this steward in the service of a rich man to whom he had been accused of dishonesty in the management of his estate.

nagement of the affairs intrusted to him ; in consequence of which, his master calls upon him to make up his accounts and quit his stewardship. Under these circumstances, being in great distress as to the means of his future support, for "he could not dig, and to beg he was ashamed," he determined, after some deliberation, to make friends of his master's debtors, by allowing them to defraud him likewise in the settlement of their accounts, and so to secure to himself an asylum when dismissed from his stewardship. The scheme was well laid, and carried with it every probability of success : and, it is added, that his Lord commended him ; that is, that he gave him credit for his ingenuity, care, and foresight, in endeavoring to procure for himself a retreat. In pursuing the subject, our Saviour contrasts the eagerness with which we are too apt to pursue worldly advantages, with our indifference and lukewarmness to heavenly blessings. Though his plan did not answer his purpose, detection being the consequence,

sequence (the possibility of which in his great anxiety he had overlooked), yet it was evident that this world was his only object, and therefore that he kept up to his character, never losing sight of what he supposed his own interest. In this sense it is, that "the children of this world" are in their generation wiser than the "children of light." The persons here described, are such as this steward; men who, disregarding eternity and their immortal souls, place their whole felicity on this world; to secure the goods of which, they will undergo more pains than would insure them heaven. Let us, however, profit by the example, and shew ourselves equally active to attain our object—an eternal mansion of bliss; let us not suffer ourselves to be shamefully outdone, in a race where the prize is so infinitely in our favor. We know that Heaven is ready to receive us, but we know also that none can enter there, but such as fulfil the conditions required for their admission.

Let this parable stir us up to make it the chief business of our lives to procure a permanent home, when we are called upon to give up our stewardship. That we Christians are stewards to the Almighty, and that we must give an account of our stewardship, we shall scarcely deny. Let us not, then, because we may have so acted as to escape the censure of human laws, make ourselves too confident that we may not come under the appellation of unjust, when tried by the divine law.

It is not justice alone, but charity, generosity, and benevolence, which will be required from those whom the Almighty has blessed with the power. That gratitude must be due from those who have such constant blessings bestowed upon them, even the light of nature would teach us. The Christian must be liberal, as far as it is in his power, of his time, as well as his fortune; and those who are blessed with superior knowledge of their duty, are equally bound to communicate it to the ignorant and unlearned, as to relieve the bodily distresses

treasures of their poor brethren from their abundance. By a steady pursuit of such means, we may found rational hopes that when our Lord takes from us our stewardship, he will admit us to a glorious abode that will never have an end. This leads me to a conclusion of the parable, "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

By the mammon of unrighteousness, as here made use of, I understand the riches and honors of the world; which men are too apt to seek merely for themselves, but which, if properly applied, would secure them everlasting blessings. It is true that the possession of these things, too frequently, makes us forget to whom we owe them, and becomes snares to entice us to vice and folly. How many instances do we see of persons conducting themselves with piety and resignation, in adversity, who, on a sudden change of fortune, give way to the temptations it brings with it, and are lost

to virtue. The danger of an uninterrupted state of prosperity, to our future happiness, is repeatedly pointed out in holy Scripture ; and the contrast is drawn in a very striking manner, between the future state of a rich man who abused his wealth, and a poor one who, under every circumstance of distress which hunger and disease could inflict on him, submitted with patience to his lot, nor murmured against his Creator : I allude to the parable of Lazarus ; where we find the poor man, as soon as he quits this life, carried by angels into Abraham's bosom ; and the rich man lifting up his eyes in hell and soliciting a momentary relief, through the means of the person he had formerly so greatly despised : each of them sentenced according to their conduct in their different stations. Had the rich man distributed part of his superfluous wealth to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures, in honor of that God who had provided him with such abundance, he might have enjoyed all those advantages which a large fortune, properly used, procures

cures to its possessors, and acquired the blessing and prayers of the poor ; which, we may reasonably suppose efficacious before that Being in whose presence mercy shines forth in all its splendor. We are not to imagine that Lazarus was rewarded, merely on account of his poverty in this life : were that the case, what a misfortune would it be to be rich ! It was his patient submission and firm reliance on the goodness of God, under the most trying distresses ; and his humility, which confined his desires to mere food, even to the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. He murmured not at the unequal dispensations of Providence, but looked forward with confidence to the time when God in his wisdom should think fit to remove him from a world of trouble, to the mansions of eternal peace and rest. Had he, on the contrary, murmured against his God, or endeavored to better his situation by those vicious courses which the poor too frequently have recourse to and fancy that poverty will plead their excuse, reason, as well as Scripture, may convince

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convince us, he would have met with punishment, instead of reward. Indeed, so much does our future situation depend upon our present conduct, that the joys of Heaven itself could not procure us happiness, except we carried with us the requisite dispositions, which are only to be acquired in this life. How careful, therefore, ought we to be, while time is yet allowed us, to form our minds according to the precepts of the Gospel, that we may be capable of receiving those blessings which our heavenly Father intended for all his creatures.

I shall mention another instance, in which the possession of riches is represented in Scripture, as fatal to virtue: when the rich, young man, applies to our Saviour, to know What he shall do to inherit eternal life? he receives for answer, That, besides a strict observance of all the commandments, he must distribute all his wealth to the poor, and dedicate his life to the service of religion. He, who knew the inmost thoughts of the heart, perceiv-
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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

us, he would have met with instead of reward. Indeed, as our future situation depends on our present conduct, that the poor man himself could not procure us a reward, except we carried with us the fruits of our labors, which are only the fruits of this life. How careful, then, should we be, while time is yet ours, to form our minds according to the precepts of the Gospel, that we may be prepared to receive those blessings which our heavenly Father intends to bestow upon us.

I mention another instance of the danger of the possession of riches is mentioned in scripture, as fatal to us. A rich young man, applying to Jesus, asks him, What he shall do to inherit life? he receives for answer, that if he would observe a strict observance of all the commandments, he must distribute his goods to the poor, and dedicate himself to the service of religion. He, who has the thoughts of the heart, peace

ed that nothing less than such a sacrifice could save him from the dangers to which his fortune exposed him; and this was proved it to be true: the young man, tho' apparently desirous of pursuing the path of virtue, suffered avarice and the love of pleasure to stifle his good resolutions, and, though with sorrows and afflictions, he lost the inestimable blessings which were before him to his view:—a melancholy instance which should serve as a warning to us, that if we be ever placed in a situation which requires us to choose between temporal and eternal possessions! But if the danger is greater, so will be the reward. Riches and honors, if appropriately used, will procure the favor of God, and a sure crown of glory to their possessor.

From a review of this subject, and the conviction of the importance of it, I have dwelt the more at length upon it. If it is rightly understood, I trust it will appear to our readers that the dispensations of Providence are much more equal than

apt at first sight to believe, and affords ample field for content and gratitude in all ranks of life. If the poor man is deprived of the luxuries and splendour of life, he escapes the cares and uneasiness inseparable from them; and though he is not able to be as extensively bountiful as his richer neighbour, he has the consolation to think that his mite will be equally acceptable as the other's talent: for what little is given, little will be required. The rich and powerful man, on the other hand, if he resists the temptations attendant on his situation, and employs his wealth, power, and abilities, to the honor of God and the service of his fellow-creatures, is sure of being received, at the end of his stewardship, with that glorious testimony of applause from his Master, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

Many of them were strict observers of the ceremonial part of the law of Moses; and they seem, by this question, to suppose that nothing more could be required of them.

"29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

"30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou, then, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work?"

"31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat."

It might have been expected that our Saviour's former miracles would have been sufficient to convince them: their desiring new ones to be wrought, whenever

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they

they thought proper, could be only for the gratification of an idle curiosity, which would have been no more likely to fix their faith, than those they had already seen and heard.

“ 32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven.

“ 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

Our Saviour here tells them, that they ought not to attribute it to Moses that their forefathers were fed with manna, but to God; Moses being only the agent in the hands of God: that bread with which they were miraculously provided, was a type and figure of that true bread which our Lord now offered them. I know of no word so expressive and extensive, as bread: it comprehends all our wants, both spiritual and temporal.

temporal. In this comprehensive sense it is generally used in Scripture; and, particularly, in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us, day by day, our daily bread."

"34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

"35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

"36. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not."

They saw him do such works, as none but God could perform; and were, therefore, inexcusable in rejecting such clear evidence.

"37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Here we see that all who are willing to avail themselves of the blessings of Christ's coming, are sure of a kind reception,

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tion, on fulfilling the conditions annexed to them. How comfortable an assurance is this ! and what an encouragement to make our “ calling and election sure ! ”

“ 38. For I came down from Heaven,
“ not to do mine own will, but the will
“ of him that sent me.

“ 39. And this is the Father’s will which
“ hath sent me, that of all which he hath
“ given me I should lose nothing, but
“ should raise it up again at the last day.”

God made man perfectly innocent, but not infallible : he was free to choose the good which his Maker had provided for him, or free to refuse it ; but every encouragement was held out to excite him to duty and obedience, and every threat employed to deter him from wickedness : eternal happiness and eternal misery were set before him, and the choice left to himself.

To choose misery, instead of happiness, is a degree of folly which no man will
allow

Now himself to be capable of ; yet of
 how folly is every one guilty who, by ne-
 glecting the conditions annexed to the at-
 tainment of happiness, forfeits his claim to
 it. We are the masters of our own fate ;
 therefore may be said to predestinate
 ourselves either to happiness or misery.
 As long as God is pleased to allow us to
 continue on earth, our final sentence is
 suspended, and must depend upon our sub-
 sequent actions. We may quit the paths
 of virtue in which we have all our lives
 travelled, (then our good actions will no
 longer avail us) ; or we may abandon our
 sins ; and if God be pleased to allow us
 to, prove the sincerity of our repent-
 ance, by a thorough amendment of life :
 in which case, we are assured that the sins
 we have committed shall no longer be re-
 membered against us. But, with life, our
 power over our fate must cease : we learn
 from Scripture that there is no pardon in the
 afterlife : " As the tree falls, so shall it lie."
 Therefore, we both live and die in a state
 of guilt, despising God's proffered mercy
 and

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and grace, we have no pretence to expect that they shall be extended to us, at the day of judgment, when we shall be called upon to give an account of the actions done in this life, and receive sentence of everlasting punishment, if we have lived and died impenitent sinners ; or of reward, if we have sincerely endeavored to perform our duty. It is in this sense alone, that I understand the doctrine of Predestination : as to that of Freewill, if man had it not, he could be neither virtuous nor wicked : he could not be accountable for his actions ; entitled to reward, or subject to punishment. Instead of being in a state little lower than the angels, deprive us of a freedom of choice, and we are reduced to a level with the beasts that perish.

God the Father (as we learn by the foregoing verse) has given into the hands of his Son, the power and dominion of the world, and of all the human race, whom he purchased by his blood, and whom he will raise again at the last day. The whole
race

race of mankind, as well those who have been for ages mouldering in the dust as those who are in existence at that awful day, shall arise, with the same bodies in which they existed when upon earth. The servants of Christ will have their mortal bodies changed into glorious bodies never again to be separated from their souls, but to enjoy together everlasting bliss in their Master's kingdom ! What an addition of happiness to the righteous, and of wretchedness to the wicked, must it be, to know that the happiness or misery which they have chosen for themselves, is to endure for ever !

May this reflection sink deep into the hearts of all my readers, that they may, whilst time is yet allowed them, make that choice which, through the tender mercies of God and the merits of their Redeemer, will insure to them a blessed immortality !

" 40. And this is the will of him that
 " sent me, that every one which seeth the
 " Son,

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“ Son, and believeth on him, may have
“ everlasting life ; and I will raise him up
“ at the last day.”

This expression, ‘ I will raise him up at
‘ the last day,’ is certainly a strong proof
of our Saviour’s divinity : the power of
raising the dead, can belong to God alone.
The expression therefore, evidently points
out, that he meant to convey the idea of
his own divinity.

“ 41. The Jews then murmured at him,
“ because he said, I am the bread which
“ came down from Heaven.

“ 42. And they said, Is not this Jesus
“ the son of Joseph, whose father and mo-
“ ther we know? how is it then that he
“ saith, I came down from Heaven?”

The humble station of our Saviour,
was a constant stumbling-block to the
Jews : their pride would never allow them
to acknowledge their Messiah, in the re-
puted son of a carpenter, but blinded their
eyes

eyes against the clearest conviction; otherwise, when they saw him perform such miracles as no other person ever attempted—miracles which were prophesied of the Messiah, and that too at a time when all men were in daily expectation of his appearance—they could not have refused their belief.

“43. Jesus, therefore, answered and
“said unto them, Murmur not among
“yourselves.

“44. No man can come to me, except
“the Father which hath sent me draw
“him: and I will raise him up at the
“last day.

“45. It is written in the prophets, And
“they shall be all taught of God. Every
“man, therefore, that hath heard, and
“hath learned of the Father, cometh unto
“me.

“46. Not that any man hath seen the
“Father, save he which is of God, he
“hath seen the Father.”

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The prophecy alluded to in the forty-fifth verse, may be found in the prophet Isaiah, chap. liv. ver. 13. : " And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord. And great shall be the peace of thy children." From the first institution of the Jewish law, God frequently spake to his people by the mouths of his priests and prophets ; but the above prophecy was never literally fulfilled until the coming of our Lord and Saviour, who personally taught the people.

" 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

" 48. I am that bread of life.

" 49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

" 50. This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

" 51. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever :
" and

"and the bread that I will give, is my flesh; which I will give for the life of the world."

To believe in Christ, is as necessary for the life of the soul, as bread is for the life of the body : each would suffer equal danger without its proper food.

" 52. The Jews, therefore, strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

When we do not make a proper use of those talents with which we are intrusted, there is no absurdity, however gross, which the human mind may not fall into. Of this there cannot be a stronger proof, than the instance before us ; in the Jews supposing our Lord to have spoken literally. The smallest exertion of their reason, one should have thought, must have convinced them that he was speaking to them by a figure, and comparing the spiritual blessings to be derived from

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the sacrifice of his body to the advantages which the natural body receives from food. But, supposing them to have fallen into so strange a mistake, had they been really desirous of knowledge, instead of murmuring amongst themselves and cavilling at the words of our Saviour, they would, with the utmost humility, have begged of him an explanation: a favor he never refused to those who, in sincerity, asked it.

“ 53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

“ 54. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

“ 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

“ 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

“ 57. As the living Father hath sent me,

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of his body to the
the natural body re
But, supposing them to
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Jesus said unto them,
I say unto you, except
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who eateth my flesh and
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m up at the last day.
my flesh is meat indeed, and
drink indeed.
that eateth my flesh, and
blood, dwelleth in me, and
the living Father hath life
in himself.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

"me, and I live by the Father; and
"eateth me, even he shall live by me."
"58. This is that bread which
"down from Heaven: not as your
"did eat manna, and are dead: but
"eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Since we derive all our spiritual
ings from our Lord's having taken
nature upon him; condescended
the weaknesses and infirmities of
given up his body as a sacrifice, to
us from our sins; this figurative
speaking of his flesh and blood, is
ly striking. But to know that we
Saviour, cannot be of the least avail
to us, except we prove our faith
by a strict adherence to the pre-
scribed in his gospel; for we may
starve our souls, when offered the
profusion of heavenly nourishment,
may our bodies by obstinately re-
eat or drink, let the banquet
for us be ever so rich or costly.
therefore be assured, that to believe

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love, fear, and obey God our Saviour in all things, is to eat his flesh and drink his blood in the true sense of the Gospel, and will procure for us all those advantages he has promised.

“ 59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

“ 60. Many, therefore, of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying ; who can hear it ?”

Although the Jews had greatly corrupted the divine law, yet as they had not mingled idolatry with their religious worship, our blessed Saviour honored the synagogue with his presence, and corrected the abuses which had crept into it. Some of his followers, who, for want of a due attention to his divine precepts, understood what he had said about his flesh and blood in a literal sense, and knowing that to be impossible, were so presumptuous as to discredit his discourse.

“ 61. When

“ 61. When Jesus knew in himself that
“ his disciples murmured at it, he said
“ unto them, Doth this offend you ?

“ 62. What and if ye shall see the Son
“ of man ascend up where he was before ?”

As our Lord was at this time in Galilee,
it is highly probable that many who were
present at this discourse, did actually
see him ascend into Heaven ; a full ac-
count of which wonderful event may be
found in the first chapter of the Acts,
verses 10. and 11.

“ 63. It is the spirit that quickeneth ;
“ the flesh profiteth nothing : the words
“ that I speak unto you, they are spirit,
“ and they are life.

“ 64. But there are some of you that
“ believe not. (For Jesus knew from
“ the beginning who they were that be-
“ lieved not, and who should betray him.)”

Though outward appearances may de-
ceive man, they can avail nothing in the

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fight of God : he knows the most secret thoughts of our heart. If we would render him true and acceptable service, it must not be with the lips only, but in spirit and in truth.

“ 65. And he said, Therefore said I
“ unto you, That no man can come unto
“ me, except it were given unto him of
“ my Father.

“ 66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more
“ with him.”

Those who, upon this occasion, left our blessed Lord, must have followed him upon motives too low and trifling to have been honored with the gift of the Holy Spirit ; and then, we cannot be surprized, that, finding his doctrines so spiritual as to render abortive whatever temporal views they might have indulged, they should desert him.

“ 67. Then

' 67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ?

' 68. Then Simon-Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

From this question of our Saviour's, we are not to suppose that he was at a loss to know how the apostles would act : he was acquainted with every thought of their hearts ; but he might wish to give them opportunity of expressing their public sentiment to him. This they did by the mouth of St. Peter : answering for them ' Lord, to whom shall we go ?' &c. well might he say so : they had been constant witnesses of his miracles : they saw him perform such acts as no man but himself had ever done, and which had convinced them that he was as he declared himself to be, the Son of God, the Messiah whose coming all their prophets

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had

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had foretold. On him, therefore, they had placed their whole hopes of happiness : had these failed them, how melancholy would have been their prospect !

“ 70. Jesus answered them, Have not
“ I chosen you twelve ; and one of you
“ is a devil ?

“ 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot, the
“ son of Simon : for he it was that should
“ betray him, being one of the twelve.”

The call of the twelve apostles, deserves our serious attention. Those who were chosen, were we to judge as the world judges, were, of all others, the least likely to have been fixed upon for such an employment : they were ignorant, illiterate men, brought up to labor, and so constantly employed in their occupations, as to have little time for the acquisition of such instruction as even many of the inferior ranks of people find the means to obtain. Our Lord seems to have fixed upon this description of men, to prove
that

that the sublime truths he came to teach required not the aid of human wisdom, or the subtilty of philosophy, but merely the exertions of an honest and upright heart: as it is written, "Out of the mouths of very babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." (Psalm viii. r. 2.) Had he chosen men of learning, the famous philosophers of the age, for his ministers, much of the success of his Gospel might have been attributed to their superior intelligence; but when we consider that the apostles were composed of fishermen, and others of the lowest rank, who had to combat not only the pride and prejudice, but all the ingenuity and learning of the most enlightened age of the world, we must confess that nothing but the power of Truth could have rendered them so successful as to have gained so complete a victory, under circumstances apparently so unpromising; nor is this the least, amongst the numerous evidences of the truth of the Christian dispensation.

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The astonishing rapid progress of Christianity is aptly described in the parable of the "grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." (St. Matthew, chap. xiii. ver. 31. 32.)

The apostles were conscious of their own inability, yet relying with implicit confidence on the support of their gracious Master, they cheerfully undertook the arduous task, notwithstanding the dangers and persecutions which they were sensible awaited them in the performance of it. Eleven of the number gloriously overcame every difficulty and distress, persevering with the utmost zeal and courage in their ministry, and cheerfully resigned their lives for the sake of their beloved master. The apostacy of the twelfth, will also furnish us with a useful lesson against spiritual pride and confidence in ourselves.

If

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If Judas who had been chosen to fill an important and glorious office, who enjoyed the advantages of being constantly in the presence of our Saviour and of hearing the precepts of eternal wisdom from his lips, was not secure, yet, giving way to temptation, forfeited those inestimable privileges, making himself a reproach to all succeeding ages, how all we presume on our own safety, except we are continually on our guard against our grand enemy? Our improvements in piety and virtue will be progressive; but they must be continual. If we have once the presumption to suppose that we have attained a sufficient height, and therefore begin to relax in our zeal, we give to our foe that opportunity for which he is constantly seeking, and risk all our former acquisitions; and the higher has been our exaltation, the more terrible will be our fall.

May the Almighty, of his infinite mercy, avert, for the sake of our blessed Lord, so dreadful a judgment from every one who
is

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is honored with the name of Christian! and may all those who have not the happiness of knowing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in this world, be made supremely blessed in that which is to come, by the most glorious and interesting of all knowledge—the knowledge of salvation, through the merits of a crucified Saviour! Then we shall all join in wonder, love, and praise, to God, for his infinite mercy, and goodness, in the redemption of lost mankind by our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ. And may the Holy Spirit so purify our hearts, as to enable us to begin that glorious work, here on earth, which will be the constant employment of the saints in Heaven, for ever and ever! Amen; Amen.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. VII.

“ 1. **A**FTER these things, Jesus walk-
“ ed in Galilee : for he would not
“ walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought
“ to kill him.”

Our Saviour here sets us an example of that prudent conduct which we ought to observe, in all the various situations in life.

We are not to expect miracles to be wrought for our preservation, let our pursuits be never so laudable ; but should make use of those means of safety which the Almighty has provided for us : to act otherwise, implies a degree of presumption,

tion, rather than an humble desire of serving God.

We have an instance of the same nature, in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, verse 23; where St. Paul, preaching to the Athenians, avails himself of the circumstance of their having an altar dedicated to ‘The Unknown God,’ to press on them the belief of the Christian religion; it being natural to suppose that a people who had worshipped their God ignorantly, and scrupled not to avow that ignorance, would gladly receive any instruction offered to them concerning him: “Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you.” By this prudent and judicious mode, St. Paul not only flattered them into a right faith, but at the same time preserved himself from persecution, perhaps from death itself, for presuming to preach a new and strange doctrine amongst them.

“2. Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles
“was at hand.”

This

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than an humble desire of

an instance of the same
eventeenth chapter of the Acts,
verses, verse 23; where St. Paul
the Athenians, avails himself
instance of their having
ted to 'The Unknown God'
them the belief of the Christian
; it being natural to find
le who had worshipped
tly, and scrupled not to
ce, would gladly receive
fered to them concerning
erefore, ye ignorantly
[declare unto you." But
judicious mode, St. Paul
l them into a right faith
ime preserved himself
perhaps from death itself
preach a new and strong
ngst them.

the Jews' feast of tabernacles

This feast was held in remem-
brance that the Jews were, during the sp-
forty years, wanderers in the wilde-
and to make the greater impresson
the minds of their descendants, it was
ordained that they should pass the
time of the feast, being seven da-
tents, or booths; re-tracing, as it were,
footsteps of their forefathers. This
was much more likely to excite
praise and gratitude for the change
God had wrought in their situation
if they had been permitted to keep
their own houses, though with ne-
much strictness, as it was a direct
to their senses.

"3. His brethren, therefore, said
"him, Depart hence, and go into
"that thy disciples also may see the
"that thou doest.

"4. For there is no man that
"any thing in secret, and he himsel-
"eth to be known openly: if thou
"these things, shew thyself to the

N n

"

“ 5. For neither did his brethren believe in him.”

The relations of our blessed Lord (for it is not supposed they were his brethren) were very anxious to have him known in the more public parts of the world: his long continuance, therefore, in Galilee, appears to have created a doubt, even in their minds, of his being the true messiah. If he were the saviour of the world, say they, why does he not shew himself as such, instead of concealing himself in this retirement? That they wished to see him publicly acknowledged in that character, cannot be doubted; as every Jew was desirous of that honor, in his nearest relation, if denied to himself.

“ 6. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.”

“ 7. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

“ 8. Go

"8. Go ye up unto this feast : I go
"not up yet unto this feast ; for my time
"is not yet full come.

"9. When he had said these words
"unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

"10. But when his brethren were gone
"up, then went he also up unto the feast,
"not openly, but as it were in secret."

Our Saviour tells his brethren, that there could be no reason for their absenting themselves from the approaching solemnity ; that they might go with the greatest propriety, and in perfect security ; for, as yet, they were not public characters, nor would be so in his life-time, and consequently not exposed to the rage and malice of the Jews, which he had drawn upon himself by exposing their vicious courses. He therefore advises them to go, giving them some hopes that he should follow them. This he afterwards did, privately : for although he thought it necessary to fulfil the whole Jewish law,

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wisdom and prudence were very conspicuous in his obedience, in suffering the heat of persecution to cool a little before he made his appearance. The Jews, who would probably have endeavored to kill him, had he gone up at the beginning of the feast, made no attempt upon him when he did go. In this conduct, our Lord exemplified the precept which he gave to his disciples : “ Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” We are, certainly, to employ every fair means of screening ourselves from troubles and dangers, and to guard against the artifices of designing people ; but we must not let this exceed a prudent care, nor come in competition with our duty : for “ What would it advantage a man, tho’ he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul !”

“ 11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he ?

“ 12. And there was much murmuring

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"ing among the people, concerning
"him; for some said, He is a good
"man: others said, Nay; but he de-
"ceiveth the people.

"13. Howbeit, no man spake openly
"of him for fear of the Jews."

Although a great part of the Jews were determined upon the destruction of our blessed Lord, yet, amongst the vast concourse of people by which he was frequently surrounded, his miracles had gained him a number of adherents. The fear, however, of their rulers, who were declaredly hostile to him, prevented his friends from openly acknowledging him in their presence.

"14. Now, about the midst of the
"feast, Jesus went up into the Temple,
'and taught.

"15. And the Jews marvelled, saying,
'How knoweth this man letters, having
'never learned?"

The

The priests, knowing that our blessed Saviour had never sat as a disciple at the feet of the doctors, nor been educated in their schools, were naturally astonished at the great knowledge of their law which he discovered when he taught in the Temple, and which, had they not been wilfully blind, must have excited their attention and respect to so extraordinary a character.

“ 16. Jesus answered them and said,
 “ My doctrine is not mine, but his that
 “ sent me.

“ 17. If any man will do his will, he
 “ shall know of the doctrine, whether it
 “ be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

“ 18. He that speaketh of himself, seek-
 “ eth his own glory : but he that seeketh
 “ his glory that sent him, the same is true,
 “ and no unrighteousness is in him.”

Those who really believed that Jesus was the Son of God, could not suppose he stood in need of earthly knowledge, as
 that

that faith would teach them that he knew every thing both in Heaven and earth. A portion of this heavenly knowledge he afterwards condescended to bestow on the apostles, for the propagation of his Gospel; particularly in the gift of tongues: a very wonderful, but necessary gift to those who were to teach all nations. By this they were not only enabled to spread the Christian religion throughout the world, but, being publicly and miraculously conferred upon them, it produced so great an effect, that no less than three thousand souls were converted by St. Peter's first sermon.

" 19. Did not Moses give you the law,
and yet none of you keepeth the law?
" Why go ye about to kill me?

" 20. The people answered and said,
" Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to
" kill thee?

" 21. Jesus answered and said unto
" them, I have done one work, and ye all
" marvel.

" 22. Moses,

“ 22. Moses, therefore, gave unto you
 “ circumcision, (not because it is of Moses,
 “ but of the fathers,) and ye on the sab-
 “ bath-day circumcise a man :

“ 23. If a man on the sabbath-day re-
 “ ceive circumcision, that the law of Mo-
 “ ses should not be broken, are ye angry
 “ at me, because I have made a man every
 “ whit whole on the sabbath-day ?

“ 24. Judge not according to the ap-
 “ pearance, but judge righteous judge-
 “ ment.”

Had the healing a man on the sabbath-day been, in reality, a violation of the law, could it be deemed a crime worthy of death ? If this had been the punishment attached to the breach of the Mosaic law, miserable indeed would have been the state of the Jews, at that period ; they being all negligent of their duty, in some points or other.

By a person's having a devil, or being possessed with a devil, was sometimes meant that he was mad, or deprived of reason ;
 and

in this sense it seems to be here used. The people were ignorant of the design of the priests to put our Lord to death; they must have thought him beside himself, when he accused them of entering into so horrid a crime. As the rite of circumcision was performed on the eighth day without regard to the sabbath, why did the Jews have marvelled or been offended that our Lord took the same day with that day for the purpose of saving a poor, suffering fellow-creature! At which every unprejudiced person must have applauded: mercy being ever predominant on true piety. But the fact that our blessed Saviour had offended against their traditions; which they pretended to be of equal force with the law and to be observed with equal veneration.

5. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

6. But he, he speaketh boldly, and says nothing unto him. Do the

O o

“ rulers

“ rulers know indeed that this is the very
 “ Christ ?

“ 27. Howbeit, we know this man
 “ whence he is : but when Christ cometh,
 “ no man knoweth whence he is.”

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, though better informed of the designs of our Lord's enemies than those of other parts, yet, seeing that he was permitted uninterruptedly to teach in the Temple, began to conceive that the priests had become converts, and allowed him to be the very christ : they, however, declare themselves of a different opinion ; and, probably, grounded their disbelief on the prophecy of Isaiah, (chapter liii. verse 8.) “ Who shall declare his generation.” This I conceive should be understood, of our blessed Lord's eternal generation : and if so, it will be readily allowed, that no one can declare it. Had not the Jews, either through wilful ignorance, or to answer their own purposes, wrested the obvious meaning of many of the prophecies in the
 Old

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Old Testament respecting the messiah, they could not have withheld their faith in him.

“ 28. Then cried Jesus in the Temple
“ as he taught, saying, Ye both know me
“ and ye know whence I am : and I am
“ not come of myself, but he that sent me
“ is true, whom ye know not.

“ 29. But I know him : for I am from
“ him, and he hath sent me.”

Those who rejected Christ Jesus, knew not God the Father ; though they presumed to call themselves, ‘ his peculiar people ! ’ Such knowledge would have directed them to his Son, whom he sent to be the mediator and saviour of the whole world.

“ 30. Then they sought to take him :
“ but no man laid hands on him, because
“ his hour was not yet come.

“ 31. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ com-

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“eth, will he do more miracles than these
“which this man hath done?”

Times and seasons belong to God; and the hour which he had appointed for the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son, was not yet arrived. Many of the people now believed on him, and others who still wavered, yet seeing the miracles he performed, were convinced that he must be some great prophet, and doubted whether Christ himself could perform greater.

* “32. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.”

From the favorable dispositions which the people began to shew towards him, the rulers of the Jews became alarmed, lest both their traditions and themselves should fall into contempt, were our Saviour longer suffered to preach and instruct the people; they therefore determined

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mined to lose no time in carrying their pre-concerted plan into execution.

“ 33. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

“ 34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”

Our Lord here points out to them, that if they now rejected his offered grace, they should hereafter seek it in vain; and that a long and obstinate refusal might provoke him to withdraw his offers, when their search after him would be fruitless.

Are we not in equal, nay, greater danger, if we do not make the best use in our Power of that grace which is offered us?

“ 35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

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“ 36. What manner of saying is this that
“ he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not
“ find me? and, Where I am, thither ye
“ cannot come?”

The Jews were very much at a loss to understand our Lord's meaning, in declaring they could not follow whither he was going; it could only be amongst the Gentiles, they thought: that being strictly forbidden by their law. The very supposition, proves that they had formed improper notions of him, and conceived that he would disregard the law of Moses whenever it suited his convenience to do so.

“ 37. In the last day, that great day of
“ the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If
“ any man thirst, let him come unto me
“ and drink.

“ 38. He that believeth on me as the
“ scripture hath said, out of his belly shall
“ flow rivers of living water.

“ 39. (But this spake he of the Spirit,
“ which they that believe on him should
“ receive:

' receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet
' given, because that Jesus was not yet
' glorified.)"

This address to the people at the feast was similar to that which our blessed Lord vouchsafed to the woman of Samaria. He tells them, to apply to him for the holy spirit : which here, as in the former case, is described under the figure of living water. None could, however, receive it, except thro' faith in him. The apostles stood greatly in need of this consolation to look forward to ; as nothing less could have at all reconciled them to the thought of parting with their blessed Master.

" 40. Many of the people, therefore,
" when they heard this saying, said, Of a
" truth, this is the prophet.

" 41. Others said, This is the Christ. But
" some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

The Jews having been without a prophet, from the time of Malachi to that of
John

John the Baptist, might well, upon the appearance of one so eminent, think he was that prophet whom they hourly expected: but some of them did not know that Christ was born in Beth-lehem, according to the prophecy of Micah, (chap. v. ver. 2.): "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." They thought him a Galilean, and rejected him upon that account.

" 42. Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Beth-lehem, where David was?"

" 43. So there was a division among the people because of him.

" 44. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him."

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In a mixed multitude, let the merits of any person be ever so great, there will always be found those who, either through interest, envy, or some other cause, will take part against him. Modesty and silence are, in most cases, the best means by which their unjust persecutions may be opposed. In the present case these people might easily have informed themselves, would they have taken the trouble to inquire, that the objection they took up, was without foundation; and that the prophecy before recited had been literally accomplished in Christ Jesus: but, satisfied with any plea, however frivolous, they would have seized upon the person of our blessed Lord, had they not been withheld by a superior power.

“ 45. Then came the officers to the
“ chief priests and Pharisees, and they said
“ unto them, Why have ye not brought
“ him ?

“ 46. The officers answered, Never man
“ spake like this man.

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“ 47. Then

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“ 47. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived ?

“ 48. Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him ?

“ 49. But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed.”

It is plain that the officers were charmed with our Lord's discourse, since they did not plead fear of the people in excuse for returning without him, but merely the effect which his words had produced on them. This stung the Pharisees, who were both their teachers and rulers, to the quick. So sudden an attachment, and that amongst their own dependants, was very alarming, and made them determine, at all events, to crush it before it gained further ground. They therefore spake with contempt of the people, for their ignorance and credulity ; intimating, that had there been any truth in the doctrines preached by Jesus Christ, they, who were so intimately versed in the law and the prophets, would have been his first converts :

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converts: and so they must have been, had not interest, envy, and pride, blinded their eyes to the truth. In their zeal, they seem to have forgotten, that if their charge of ignorance against the people were true, the fault was their own, whose duty it was to have instructed them in the law.

" 50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he
" that came to Jesus by night, being one of
" them,)

" 51. Doth our law judge any man be-
" fore it hear him, and know what he
" doeth ?

" 52. They answered and said unto
" him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search,
" and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no
" prophet.

" 53. And every man went unto his
" own house."

We are pleased, for the honor of hu-
man nature, to find one amongst this de-
testable band, possessed of sentiments of

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justice and humanity ; yet we cannot but lament, that fear of his fellow judges, and the apprehension of drawing on himself their general censure, prevented his entering as fully into the defence of our blessed Lord as the conversations he had had with him seem to have enabled him to have done. Nicodemus appears to have had a good heart, and a judgment open to conviction ; but to have wanted strength of mind to pursue the truth at the expence of his personal interest and reputation. His observation was so just, that it left his brethren no room for reply : as it is a principle, not only of the Jewish law but of the law of every civilized country in the world, not to condemn a person accused, till he has been heard in his defence.

Poole observes, that they were mistaken in asserting that no prophet came out of Galilee ; as both Nahum and Jonah were of the tribe of Zabulon, to whose lot Galilee fell. It seems scarcely possible that the chief priests and Pharisees should have
been

been ignorant of this circumstance ; or of the real place of the nativity of our Saviour. It seems more probable that, depending upon the ignorance of the people, they asserted whatever falsehoods they judged most likely to answer their purpose ; and, taking advantage of the general prejudice which seems to have subsisted amongst the Jews against the Galileans, to have wished to impress upon their minds, that Christ was a native of that part, and consequently unworthy of attention. Of this prejudice, we have a striking proof in a former chapter of this gospel ; where Nathaniel says, “ Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ? ” Nazareth being in Galilee. The chief priests and Pharisees seem to have studied the Scriptures, only for the purpose of perverting and wresting them to their own interested views : a practice which has, I fear, been too much followed by some of our modern Infidels. Let us pursue a different path, and study them as the means of acquiring

quiring that knowledge which leadeth to everlasting life. Let us adore the goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness of God ; who has assured us, that, if we seek *him faithfully*, we shall find him.

Grant us grace, O heavenly Father, so to read and digest the holy Scriptures, that we may make them the rule and guide of our lives and actions, for the *sake of Jesus Christ*, our Lord ! Amen.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. VIII.

1. **J**ESUS went unto the mount of Olives.

"2. And early in the morning he came again into the Temple, and all the people came unto him : and he sat down and taught them."

Our blessed Lord was early at the Temple: his whole time upon earth was spent in the work of man's redemption; with which he never suffered any indulgence of his human nature to interfere: surely, then, he has a right to expect of us an equal attention to our own welfare, and
that

that we should make the best use of the time allowed us to work out our own salvation. I wish I could say that this is the case: but, I fear, it is too general a practice to indulge in sloth, on the day particularly set apart for divine worship and the care of our souls, than on any other. The least fatal consequence of this is, that we hurry to the house of God, with minds very unfit to present ourselves before the throne of that Being, who is not satisfied with lip-worship, but requires the worship of the spirit. It is, moreover, frequently made an excuse for absenting ourselves altogether; or for going too late, by which we not only disturb the devotions of others, but lose the benefit of a part of the service, as material, if not more so, than any other. The Exhortation, which forms the first part of our church service, is well calculated to inspire us with those dispositions so essential to true devotion: this is naturally followed by an open and public avowal of our offences; after which, the priest as-
sures

asures us, on the authority of God himself, in the Absolution, that, if we have been sincere in our repentance and faith, we stand pardoned and absolved of our sins. The comfort of this absolution to a truly-pious and devout mind, conscious that it has fulfilled the conditions required, is so great, that one would think it is a part of the service which, above all others, Christians would wish to be present at.

Let me entreat of my readers who may have fallen into this error, to give it their serious consideration, and to make it a rule of their conduct to rise early on the Lord's day, that they may have time to prepare their minds for the great duty they are about to perform.

People generally wish to appear dressed in the most decent manner they can, when they go to church; and this is right: but ought they not to be equally solicitous about the clothing of their souls, when brought into the more immediate presence of their Maker? Having before endeavored to point out the necessity of public as

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well as private worship, I shall here merely observe, that, although we may be ever so well acquainted with our duty, yet such is the unsteadiness of our nature, that we cannot be too often reminded of it. God requires active virtues to make us acceptable to him : good works must be united with faith ; for though salvation is promised through the merits of Jesus Christ, yet it is promised upon the conditions of love and obedience ; and whoever rejects the terms must abide the consequences.

Idleness, either of body or mind, was never intended for man : he cannot, it is true, with all his art and industry, form the smallest herb, or make a stalk of corn to grow in the field : such power belongs to God alone : but shall we therefore say that the labor of the husbandman is unnecessary ? The Almighty in his wisdom has ordained man to live by his own industry : when he has performed the part allotted for him, it becomes his duty to beg God's blessing on the work of his hands. As well might we expect

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in private worship, I shall have
 serve, that, although we are
 acquainted with our darkness
 ineffectualness of our nature
 be too often reminded of our
 active virtues to make us
 him: good works must be
 with; for though salvation is
 through the merits of Jesus
 promised upon the condition
 obedience; and whoever
 must abide the consequences
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 e, with all his art and
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 belongs to God alone: he
 ore say that the labor of man
 is unnecessary? The Al-
 dom has ordained man to
 industry: when he has
 part allotted for him, it is
 duty to beg God's blessing
 his hands. As well might

expect fallow ground to produce
 tiful harvest, as that we can
 crown of glory in our Lord's
 without laboring in his vineyard.
 case, God has been pleased to p
 the way by which we may attain
 ject in view, and graciously prom
 blessing on our endeavors.

"3. And the Scribes and
 brought unto him a woman
 adultery: and when they had
 the midst,

"4. They say unto him, Ma
 woman was taken in adultery
 very act.

"5. Now Moses in the law con
 us, that such should be stoned:
 sayest thou?

"6. This they said, tempting
 they might have to accuse hi
 Jesus stooped down, and with
 wrote on the ground, as th
 heard them not."

The offence of the woman was of so heinous a nature, being a direct breach of a positive commandment of God, and in its consequences so fatal to the peace and good order of society, that the Jewish law had affixed to it the punishment of death. Her accusers, therefore, knowing the benignity and humanity of our Lord's disposition, thought this a good opportunity of entrapping him to give some order respecting her, contrary to the severity of their law, which might afford them a ground of accusation against him. Our Lord's reply not only defeated this insidious purpose, but made their malice recoil, in shame and confusion, on themselves.

" 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

" 8. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

" 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out

“ out one by one, beginning at the eldest,
“ even unto the last : and Jesus was left
“ alone, and the woman standing in the
“ midst.

“ 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself,
“ and saw none but the woman, he said
“ unto her, Woman, where are those thine
“ accusers ? hath no man condemned
“ thee ?

“ 11. She said, No man, Lord. And
“ Jesus said unto her, Neither do I con-
“ demn thee : go, and sin no more.”

In the execution of malefactors, under the Jewish law, the hands of the witnesses were to be the first laid upon the criminal : our blessed Saviour, therefore, fulfilled the law of Moses in this respect, by calling on any one who chose to stand forth as her accuser, to ‘ cast the first stone at her ;’ but this he coupled with such a condition, as made the most hardened of them shrink from the hateful office.

There can be no doubt but our Lord, who was purity itself, and in whom was no shadow

shadow of guilt, must have regarded the crime of this woman with that degree of horror it would naturally excite, yet seeing, as we may suppose, repentance in the heart of the criminal, he wished to give her an opportunity of repenting of her sin, and of proving by her future conduct the sincerity of her contrition; he wished likewise to check that malice which alone actuated her accusers to bring her to punishment, instead of the only justifiable motive—that of affording an example, to deter others from the commission of similar crimes. And here we have a very remarkable instance of the power of conscience, even in men who are far gone in vice: the appeal was too sudden and direct, to be parried. Examine well your own hearts; see if you have not, at some time or other of your lives, been guilty of as great, or at least of other crimes, and perhaps without equal temptations: are you sure that, if placed in a similar situation, you should have resisted more than she did? Be, then, candid to the offences
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that man, who stands in need of hourly pardon from his Creator, (without which he must be subject to eternal misery) should be so severe to his fellow-sinners, instead of endeavoring to reclaim them? yet this we see to be daily the case. Let us contrast this with the conduct of our blessed Lord, to whom we ought to look up as a pattern. Having shewn the unhappy woman the full extent of her guilt, by exposing her to the sentence of the law denounced against her crime, when her accusers, stung by their own consciences, had withdrawn their prosecutions, he reminds her of the punishment she had escaped, and exhorts her to lead a better life in future: "Go, and sin no more:" as if he had said, Let the past prove a warning to you, never again to be guilty of a breach of the laws of your God, who has now shewn such mercy to you; keep a strict guard over all your thoughts, words and actions, and, by the propriety of your future conduct, prove the sincerity of your repentance, and your firm determination

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that man, who stands in need of pardon from his Creator. and he must be subject to eternal punishment so severe to his fellow-men of endeavoring to reclaim him. we see to be daily the case. Contrast this with the conduct of the Lord, to whom we ought to be a pattern. Having shewn the man the full extent of her sin, exposing her to the sentence of the law, pronounced against her crime, which she deserves, stung by their own consciences, and withdrawn their prosecutions, she is left to the punishment of the law, and exhorts her to leave her sin in future: "Go, and sin no more," as he had said, Let the past prove a warning to you, never again to be guilty of the laws of your God. He shewn such mercy to you, and guard over all your thoughts, words, and actions, and by the proper use of your future conduct, prove the sincerity of your repentance, and your firm

OUR BLESSED SAV

mination to adhere invariably of virtue, that others who may be like yourself, may, by the example visible in your life, be induced to follow your good example.

"12. Then spake Jesus again saying, I am the light of the world: that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

"13. The Pharisees, therefore, said to him, Thou bearest record of thyself, and sayest thou that thou art true."

"14. Jesus answered and said to them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, nor whither I go."

Simeon foretold, in the 12th chapter of St. Luke, that our Lord should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people." Those who rejected such

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course, walk in spiritual darkness : it was their wilful ignorance of whence he came, and whither he was going, that made them reject the record he gave of himself, as the ' light of the world.'

" 15. Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge
" no man.

" 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment
" is true ; for I am not alone, but I and
" the Father that sent me.

" 17. It is also written in your law,
" that the testimony of two men is true.

" 18. I am one that bear witness of
" myself, and the Father that sent me bear-
" eth witness of me."

Christ here points out to them, by a familiar reference to their own law, that they ought to believe in him. The Father had not only publicly declared him, at his baptism, to be his only-begotten Son, but gave daily confirmation of it in the miracles he performed, which none but God could do : here, then, were

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fe, walk in spiritual darkness: wilful ignorance of where he whither he was going, that was the record he gave of himself of the world.'

5. Ye judge after the flesh, man.

5. And yet if I judge, my judgment is not alone, but the Father that sent me.

It is also written in the testimony of two men.

I am one that bear witness, and the Father that sent me.

here points out to them reference to their own hearts to believe in him. They not only publicly declared baptism, to be his only-begotten, gave daily confirmation of miracles he performed, that God could do: here, the

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

were two witnesses, which was Jewish law required for the establishment of a fact.

"19. Then said they unto him, 'Is thy Father?' Jesus answered, 'neither know me, nor my Father had known me, ye should have known my Father also.'

"20. These words spake Jesus, 'Treasury, as he taught in the ' and no man laid hands on him ' hour was not yet come.'

All our Lord's miracles I availed to convince the Scribes and Pharisees of his divine origin: they refused in considering him merely the son of Joseph; to whom, from his life, they were not inclined to respect: yet, the time appointed Christ should be delivered into their hands, not being yet come, they could do him with their tongues.

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**" 21. Then said Jesus again unto them,
" I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and
" shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye
" cannot come."**

Those who will not accept of proffered grace and pardon when held out to them, run great risques that, when they would seek it, it may be too late.

**: " 22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill
" himself? because he saith, Whither I
" go, ye cannot come.**

**" 23. And he said unto them, Ye are
" from beneath; I am from above: ye
" are of this world; I am not of this
" world.**

**" 24. I said, therefore, unto you, That
" ye shall die in your sins: for if ye be-
" lieve not that I am he, ye shall die in
" your sins."**

**: The blindness of the Jews, as to the
real character of our Saviour, led them
into the most absurd and contradictory
suppositions**

suppositions concerning him. Yet one would have thought that, although they withheld their belief in him, they had had too many proofs of his blameless conduct, his piety, and strict adherence to the law, to suppose it possible he could entertain the design of self-murder: a crime not only of the deepest dye as it respects our duty to God, but, of all others, the most fatal to ourselves, by cutting us off from all possibility of repentance, without which the Gospel gives us no hope of pardon.

Our Saviour then condescends to explain to them what they seemed not to have understood; namely, that if, notwithstanding all the proofs he had given them of his divine mission, (proofs which could not leave a doubt in any mind which really sought for truth,) they still persisted in their obstinacy and disbelief, they should die in their sins, and, consequently, whither he went they could not come; or, in other words, they could have no part in that happiness which he offered to those who believed in him.

“ 25. Then

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“ 25. Then said they unto him, Who
“ art thou? And Jesus saith unto them,
“ Even the same that I said unto you from
“ the beginning.

“ 26. I have many things to say and to
“ judge of you: but he that sent me is
“ true; and I speak to the world those
“ things which I have heard of him.

“ 27. They understood not that he
“ spake to them of the Father.

“ 28. Then said Jesus unto them,
“ When ye have lifted up the Son of
“ man, then shall ye know that I am he,
“ and that I do nothing of myself; but as
“ my Father hath taught me, I speak these
“ things.

“ 29. And he that sent me is with me:
“ the Father hath not left me alone; for
“ I do always those things that please him.

“ 30. As he spake these words, many
“ believed on him.

“ 31. Then said Jesus to those Jews
“ which believed on him, If ye continue
“ in my word, then are ye my disciples
“ indeed;

“ 32. And

32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

If the Jews would have properly attended to the instruction offered to them by our Lord, or even manifested an inclination to receive it, he would have rectified all the errors and mistakes to which they had been led by the traditions of their forefathers, and their own perverseness, respecting the kingdom of the messiah, as well as every thing relative to himself necessary to salvation; but finding them too much influenced by pride and obstinacy to accept so gracious an offer, he warns them of the judgment, or punishment, they were to expect at his hands. Some, however, as he foretels, escaped this dreadful threat, by becoming by his death converts to all those divine truths which he in vain offered them in his life-time. Amongst the multitude present, there were many upon whom this discourse produced its proper effect, and, fixing their belief in him, insured to them

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them his gracious promises, that they should, as his true disciples, be fully instructed in the truth ; and that the truth should make them free ; that is, deliver them from the bondage of sin in which they had been before held.

“ 33. They answered him, We be
“ Abraham’s seed, and were never in
“ bondage to any man : how sayest thou,
“ Ye shall be made free ?

“ 34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever com-
“ mitteth sin is the servant of sin.

“ 35. And the servant abideth not in
“ the house for ever ; but the Son abideth
“ ever.

“ 36. If the Son, therefore, shall make
“ you free, ye shall be free indeed.

“ 37. I know that ye are Abraham’s
“ seed : but ye seek to kill me, because
“ my word hath no place in you.

“ 38. I speak that which I have seen
“ with my Father ; and ye do that which
“ ye have seen with your father.”

This

This boast of the Jews, that they had **Abraham** to their father, only served to **poin:** out the more forcibly their own **depravity**, in acting so contrary to the bright **example** he had set them. A profligate and vicious person, who succeeds to the honors of a long and noble line of ancestors whose names and characters have been transmitted down with unblemished lustre, derives no title to respect from this accidental circumstance; on the contrary, he has not only to answer for his own vicious conduct, but must blush, if he has any shame left, whenever he is addressed by a name which, till it came to him, had always commanded respect and veneration. Let no one presume to think highly of himself, on account of such accidental distinctions, but such as, instead of tarnishing their lustre, have added brilliancy to them by the practice of virtue; which alone is true nobility; and let us all endeavor to dignify our several stations, by the rectitude of our conduct, and by adorning our minds with those Christian graces and

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accomplishments which will alone avail us in the sight of that Being on whom all our happiness, both here and hereafter, depends. Let us take for our constant guide and pattern, the divine author of our religion, Jesus Christ, our Lord; in whom was united whatever of excellence we can form an idea of.

To check this false pride of the Jews, our Saviour tells them, that, so far from being free, they were under the worst of servitude—the shameful and degrading slavery of sin; and that their plea as ‘the seed of Abraham,’ instead of securing to them the advantages they supposed, would only add to their condemnation, whilst they persisted in their unbelief. Let us apply this to ourselves, nor suppose, that because under the name of Christians we belong to the church militant here on earth, we shall be admitted into the church triumphant in Heaven: to entitle us to so inestimable a privilege, we must become Christians, not in name only, but in sincerity and truth.

“ 39. They

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omplishments which will be in the sight of that Being our happiness, both here and hereafter. Let us take for our model and pattern, the divine religion, Jesus Christ, in whom was united whatever is good and perfect, to form an idea of. To check this false pride, the Saviour tells them, that if they were under the law, they would be under the curse — the shameful acknowledgment of sin; and that the freedom of Abraham, instead of giving them the advantages they think it only add to their comfort, they persisted in their sin. Let us apply this to ourselves, that because under the law we belong to the church here on earth, we shall be able to see the church triumphant in heaven, and be able to follow it, and be able to become Christians, not in sincerity and truth.

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“ 39. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.]
 “ unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.”
 “ 40. But now ye seek to kill me, which that hath told you the truth, which ye have heard of God : this did ye not believe.”

“ 41. Ye do the deeds of your father.”
 “ Then said they to him, We be-
 “ lieve of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”

“ 42. Jesus said unto them, If ye were your Father’s children, ye would believe me : for I proceeded forth and came from my Father, and ye have not believed me. Neither came I of myself, but he that sent me.”

How different was the conduct of the patriarch, from whom they bore descent ! “ Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.” upon the first call, he left his idolatrous friends and country, for the sake of the true God, whom he worshipped.

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and served with the utmost reverence; nay, so implicit a confidence did he place in his Maker, that he shewed himself ready, on his requisition, to sacrifice to him his only son—that son through whom all the gracious promises of God to him were to be accomplished. So far were the Jews from following his example, that they laid in wait to kill the Saviour of the world, because he told them the truth. Their whole conduct proved that they belonged rather to the father of lies, than to faithful Abraham.

“ 43. Why do ye not understand my
“ speech? even because ye cannot hear
“ my word.

“ 44. Ye are of your father the devil,
“ and the lusts of your father ye will do:
“ he was a murderer from the beginning,
“ and abode not in the truth, because
“ there is no truth in him. When he
“ speaketh a lye, he speaketh of his own:
“ for he is a lyar, and the father of it.

“ 45. And

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served with the utmost reverence, so implicit a confidence did he place in his Maker, that he shewed himself, on his requisition, to be his only son—that son through whom the gracious promises of God were to be accomplished. So he shews from following his example, laid in wait to kill the Saviour, because he told them that his whole conduct proved him devoted rather to the father of his faithful Abraham.

Why do ye not understand? even because ye cannot receive the word.

Ye are of your father, who is the lusts of your father; ye are as a murderer from the beginning; he abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he saith a lye, he speaketh of his own; he is a liar, and the father of lies.

“45”

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“45. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

“46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

“47. He that is of God heareth these words: ye, therefore, hear them, because ye are not of God.”

Their understandings were so clouded, by the bondage of sin and that they could not discern the truth offered to them in the plainest language and with the most convincing arguments. As the children of the devil (as they were here properly called), they delighted in lies: these were his proper weapons, which from the beginning he had furnished mankind, murdering those souls who had seduced to forsake the true God, idolatry, and with which he was working to induce his followers to forsake God's mercy, offered them through Christ. Our Lord's appeal to the truth of his own life for the truth of his

“or figs of thistles?”

The triumph of truth must be the destruction of the kingdom of Satan; artifice would therefore be, if employed by him, to divert mankind from receiving it.

Nothing is more dangerous to the honor and happiness of society, than hypocrisy. Let me, therefore, entreat my readers, but more especially those people in whose tender minds truth is both of good and evil are most contracted, to guard against this with the utmost vigilance; let me warn against the practice, even in sport, the idea, that if it injures no one, can be no harm in it: this is a

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ine, is very forcible, and attracts attention. In another passage, he refers to a similar thing, "Do men gather grapes of thistles?"

The triumph of truth and the victory of the kingdom of God would therefore be employed by him, to diversify it.

Nothing is more dangerous to the peace and happiness of the church.

Let me, therefore, dear readers, but more especially in whose tender hearts of good and evil are so

acted, to guard against the utmost vigilance; let us be strict in the practice, even in the least, that if it injures no one, it is no harm in it: this is the only way which, though common, is fallacious: since what is wrong, can never be any

stance be made otherwise; and expressly told, that we are not to do that good may come of it: besides there no other reason, the danger of an indulgence ought to deter us: never tell where to stop; and, if conferred to become habitual, the consequence may prove fatal to our peace, both here and hereafter. The character of a liar, universally held in the utmost contempt, and, should he speak truth, no one would give him.

Let those, also, who reject the Gospel, remember that, in so doing they disown God, who made them and every thing in it, a counter-part of those wicked and ungodly Jews who were constantly and reviling our blessed Lord.

"48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not verily, thou art a Samaritan, and a devil?"

"49. Jesus answered, I have said unto you, and ye say, thou art a Samaritan, and a devil?"

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“ devil : but I honour my Father, and ye
“ do dishonour me.

“ 50. And I seek not mine own glory:
“ there is one that seeketh and judgeth.”

I cannot suffer this passage to pass, without pointing out the distinction made by our Saviour, between private injuries and those offered to God, or religion ; the former he submitted to with patience and meekness, the latter he never suffered to pass without censure : thus, when they reproached him with being a Samaritan, (the greatest insult which could be offered to a Jew,) he suffers it to pass without notice ; but when they added, that he had a devil, he felt the honor of God and religion concerned in denying the charge and declaring, that every work he performed was in honor of the Father, tho' they attempted to dishonor him by supposing him in league with the devil. Nothing could equal the impiety of this supposition, but the absurdity of it : this is more fully pointed out in another passage, where

where the Jews accuse him of casting devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; as if he would lend his assistance to effect his own destruction.

From our Lord's conduct upon occasion, let us learn to despise arious attacks upon ourselves (further may be necessary to clear our character from any imputation of guilt or discredit upon them), and be at all times to support with steadiness, though heat or passion, those sublime truths which all our hopes of happiness are and to vindicate the honor of God's religion, if ever we should happen in company with those who shall require such a vindication necessary; for it is a virtue to put up with injuries, silence in such cases as these are pardonable; since, by such a conduct may be ranked amongst the number of unbelievers, and thereby add our share to the affronts offered to God, and the great injury of religion. "Wherefore, shall be ashamed of:

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“ of my words, in this adulterous and sinful
“ generation, of him also shall the Son of
“ man be ashamed, when he cometh in the
“ glory of his Father, with the holy angels.”
—St. Mark, chap. viii. ver. 38.

“ 51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If
“ a man keep my saying he shall never see
“ death.

“ 52. Then said the Jews unto him,
“ Now we know that thou hast a devil.
“ Abraham is dead, and the prophets ;
“ and thou sayest, If a man keep my say-
“ ing he shall never taste of death.

“ 53. Art thou greater than our father A-
“ braham, which is dead? and the prophets
“ are dead : whom makest thou thyself?

“ 54. Jesus answered, If I honour my-
“ self, my honour is nothing : it is my
“ Father that honoureth me, of whom ye
“ say, That he is your God.

“ 55. Yet ye have not known him ; but
“ I know him : and if I should say, I know
“ him not, I shall be a lyar like unto you ;
“ but I know him, and keep his saying.”

Those

Those who, from their wilful blindness, understood our Lord as speaking of natural instead of spiritual death, might well conclude that he was deprived of his senses, or (as they termed it) had a devil. There was, however, a material distinction between those afflicted with madness and those possessed with devils : the devils knew our Lord, and gave testimony of him ; nay, they presumed to argue with him for coming to torment them before the time, or at least before the time that they expected him : mad people, who frequently do not know their nearest friends, could not, of course, discern the Son of God in the man Christ Jesus. The power of the devil, in this and every other instance, was greatly diminished after our Lord's death ; who suffered to relieve mankind from the bondage of falsehood and iniquity.

The Jews, extremely jealous for the honor of their ancestors, were greatly offended that our Lord should pretend even to an equality with them, and therefore

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question him as to the character he meant to assume ; to which, after again reproaching them with their want of belief in him whom they professed to acknowledge as their God, he replies :

“ 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.

“ 57. Then said the Jews unto him, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?

“ 58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

“ 59. Then took they up stones to cast at him : but Jesus hid himself and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

The Jews, with all their pride of ancestry, never pretended that Abraham or Moses were of divine descent ; they therefore lost all patience, when our blessed Lord declared himself to be so ; as that placed him infinitely above those truly revered

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tion him as to the character
same; to which, after again
hem with their want of belie
n they professed to acknow
God, he replies:

6. Your father Abraham
my day, and he saw it, and

7. Then said the Jews
ou art not yet fifty years
thou seen Abraham?

3. Jesus said unto them
y, I say unto you, Before
I am.

Then took they up stones
m: but Jesus hid himself
of the Temple, going thro
of them, and so passed by.

Jews, with all their pride
never pretended that Abra
ere of divine descent; they
all patience, when our
clared himself to be so; and
im infinitely above those

revered and exalted character
whom they boasted their origin.
derstand our Lord's reply, in
verse, we must recollect that
graciously pleased to reveal to
that, in his seed, all the nation
earth should be blessed; then
looked forward, by the eye of fa
time when our Saviour was to a
earth, and rejoiced so to see it. Th
of our Lord, in verse 58, is exact
to that in the 14th verse of the thi
ter of Exodus, which God makes
who inquired by what name he sh
scribe him: "I AM THAT I A
" he said, Thus shalt thou say unto
"dren of Israel, I AM hath sent
"you." God did not style himse
mighty creator and preserver of
worlds, but only I AM. If Moses
name that would fully describe t
and attributes of God, he required
fibility; there being no words in
guage that can at all express the
perfection of his infinite majesty

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creatures must not expect infinite knowledge. Christ, in like manner says, "Before Abraham was, I am." A date and period may be fixed to things finite; but time or limit can have nothing to do with eternity.

I cannot quit this subject, without addressing one observation to those who, calling themselves Christians, deny the divinity of our Saviour. We have here a positive declaration to that effect, from his own lips, and that expressed in such clear terms, that the Jews to whom he addressed it so perfectly understood his meaning, that, deeming it blasphemy, they were desirous of putting him to instant death for his presumption. Are not those who wilfully shut their eyes to a truth which even his mortal enemies could not but understand, though they would not credit, equally guilty with them?

We may see by the whole conduct of the Jews, the danger of pride and obstinacy. Let us, then, taking warning by their fate, submit ourselves entirely, and
with

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with the utmost humility and gratitude,
to God's holy will and pleasure; having
a true and lively faith in the Father, the
Son, and the Holy Ghost, ever one God,
world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER

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CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

ST. JOHN, CHAP. IX.

“ 1. **A**ND as Jesus passed by, he saw
“ a man ~~which~~ was blind from
“ his birth.

“ 2. And his disciples asked him, say-
“ ing, Master, Who did sin, this man, or
“ his parents, that he was born blind?

“ 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this
“ man sinned, nor his parents: but that
“ the works of God should be made ma-
“ nifest in him.”

In the chapter we are now about to
consider, we have another proof of the
power and goodness of our Lord, mani-
fested

CHAPTER THE THIRTE

ST. JOHN, CHAP. II

1. **A**ND as Jesus passed by a man ~~which~~ was ~~his~~ birth.

"2. And his disciples asked him, Master, Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"3. Jesus answered, Neither he nor his parents: but the works of God should be manifest in him."

the chapter we are now about to read, we have another proof of the love and goodness of our Lord, and

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rested to a blind beggar; and, of the unbelief of the Jews, of impiety to which pride and will carry those who are determined to shut their eyes to the light of truth.

To understand the question put to our Lord by his disciples, we must remember that, at this time, the doctrine of the migration of the soul prevailed among the Jews; that is, that at the death of the body, the soul entered into some new body, more exalted or inferior according to the reward or punishment for the sins committed in a former state of life. That some of the disciples had imbibed this doctrine, is not difficult to see. As our Lord, when he admitted them to the honor of becoming his disciples, received them with all their errors: nor was it till after a long time, and by imperceptible degrees, that he was able to expel from their minds these vain notions, and to establish truth in their stead: nor can we say that

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work was completed in them till after his ascension, when he was graciously pleased to send them the gift of the Holy Ghost, to confirm and strengthen them in all the divine precepts he had taught them while on earth.

If such was their belief, the question they put, on seeing a man who had been born blind, was exceedingly natural: Was it the sin of this man, in a former state of existence, that drew on him this misfortune; or was it the crime of his parents which produced it? Our blessed Lord, in his reply, takes the opportunity of pointing out to them the folly and absurdity of man's attempting to enter into the counsels of his Maker: he tells them, that it was neither on account of his sin, nor of that of his parents, that he was born blind; and that, so far from its being a misfortune to him, as they supposed, it would soon appear to have been a real blessing and the means of manifesting the wonderful works of God in him. Ought not this to prove a salutary lesson to us not to presume

work was completed in them at his ascension, when he was graciously to send them the gift of the Holy Spirit to confirm and strengthen them in the divine precepts he had taught them on earth.

If such was their belief, what did they put, on seeing a man who was born blind, was exceedingly unbecom-
 it the sin of this man, in a former existence, that drew on him this misfortune; or was it the crime of his father which produced it? Our blessed Saviour, in his reply, takes the opportunity of pointing out to them the folly and wickedness of man's attempting to enter into the counsel of his Maker: he tells them, either on account of his sin, or on account of his parents, that he was born blind; that, so far from its being a punishment to him, as they supposed, it appeared to have been a real blessing, the means of manifesting the mighty works of God in him. Ought not this to be a salutary lesson to us not to

to murmur at, or complain of, the dispensations of Providence? for, so we, that we frequently consider what we afterwards are convicted to be productive of the greatest good, we ought to be to those who condescend to watch over us, to give us those things only which seem fitting for us, instead of such as ignorance and folly are often to solicit!

Another, and very useful, lesson we may learn from this passage is, not to be so ready as we generally are to see people plunged into misfortune, and consider them as punishments for crimes. That the Almighty sometimes punish individuals as well as nations for great and crying sins, we learn from the authority of Scripture and the experience of all ages. Let this consideration make us extremely watchful and attentive to our own conduct; and not induce us to form a judgment of others, which may be

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ill founded, and at any rate tends to lessen that degree of charity and compassion which we owe to all our fellow-creatures.

“ 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.

“ 5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Christ came to glorify the Father by those works which he wrought for the redemption of lost mankind, and which he completely performed in the short period of his life ; as we know from his declaration in his last moments : “ it is finished.”

Let us, also, work at the great business of our salvation, ‘ while it is day ;’ that is, whilst time is afforded us ; ‘ for the night cometh when no man can work :’ the period approaches, when death shall put an end to our labors, and finally seal our doom !

Our Lord was a sure and constant light to all who believed on him, while he remained

ill founded, and at any rate not that degree of charity and love which we owe to all our fellow-men.

- “ 4. I must work the work
“ sent me, while it is day: for
“ eth, when no man can work.”
“ 5. As long as I am in the
“ am the light of the world.”

Christ came to glorify in those works which he wrought for the redemption of lost mankind. He completely performed in the period of his life; as we know from his declaration in his last moments: “ I am the light of the world.”

Let us, also, work at the great work of our salvation, ‘ while it is day: for the time is afforded us; ‘ for something when no man can work: when death approaches, when death stands at the door, and finally is at the door!’

Our Lord was a sure and constant example to all who believed on him, while he

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remained on earth; nor did he exert the influence of that blessed death, but left it in full and glorious Gospel.

- “ 6. When he had thus spoken
“ on the ground, and made
“ spittle, and he anointed the
“ blind man with the clay,
“ 7. And said unto him,
“ the pool of Siloam, (which
“ pretation, Sent.) He went
“ therefore, and washed, and

That our blessed Saviour gave sight to this man by a sign, cannot be doubted; but he sometimes gives sight for wise and good reasons, and not for the sake of second causes. In this instance, our Lord appears to have opened his eyes and ordered him to go to Siloam, to prove his faith to his own satisfaction, (for that was the will of him who could read every heart,) but to shew it forth

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and to point out the wonderful efficacy of faith in him. We have no reason to suppose this pool, though a very ancient one, (being mentioned in Nehemiah, chap. iii. ver. 15.) had any particular virtue in it; yet, had he gone to any other, he would doubtless not have returned seeing; as it would have implied a want of faith in our Saviour, or a design to impose upon him.

“ 8. The neighbours, therefore, and
“ they which before had seen him that he
“ was blind, said, Is not this he that sat
“ and begged?

“ 9. Some said, This is he; others said,
“ He is like him: but he said, I am he.

“ 10. Therefore said they unto him,
“ How were thine eyes opened?

“ 11. He answered and said, A man
“ that is called Jesus made clay, and
“ anointed mine eyes, and said unto me,
“ Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and
“ I went and washed, and I received sight.

“ 12. Then said they unto him, Where
is he? and he said, I know not.

“ 13. They

and to point out the wonderful *faith* in him. We have no reason to *pose* this pool, though a very *one* being mentioned in Nehemiah *er.* 15.) had any particular *et*, had he gone to any other, *oubtless* not have returned *ould* have implied a want of *aviour*, or a design to impose

" 8. The neighbours, *these* *they* which before had seen *was* blind, said, Is not this *ind* begged?

" 9. Some said, This is he; *other* *He* is like him: but he said, I am

" 10. Therefore said they *How* were thine eyes opened?

" 11. He answered and said, *at* is called Jesus made *ointed* mine eyes, and said *to* the pool of Siloam, and *went* and washed, and I received

" 12. Then said they unto him, *and* he said, I know not.

" 13. They brought to *him* that aforetime was bli

" 14. And it was the sabbath *Jesus* made the clay, and *eyes.*"

This miracle was so public that it left no room for *the* circumstance of the man's born blind, cut off the *would* doubtless have been *man's* blindness been *sometimes*, admits of cure. *tempt* therefore made, was *him* as an impostor, who *of* a likeness to impose upon *As* he persisted, however, *himself* to be the real per *been* born blind, they carried *Pharisees*, that they might *and* account for so wonderful *stance.*

" 15. Then again the *asked* him how he had

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“ fight. He said unto them, He put clay
“ upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do
“ see.

“ 16. Therefore said some of the Pha-
“ risees, This man is not of God, because
“ he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others
“ said, How can a man that is a sinner do
“ such miracles? And there was a di-
“ vision among them.

“ 17. They say unto the blind man
“ again, What sayest thou of him, that
“ he hath opened thine eyes? He said,
“ He is a prophet.”

The Pharisees were exceedingly inqui-
sitive about this miracle. They saw that it
had made such an impression upon the
people, that, except they could detect the
falsehood of it, or attribute its perfor-
mance to some bad cause, they should
lose many of their votaries. For this pur-
pose, they again question the man, in
hopes to entrap him into some contra-
diction by which they might destroy the
credit of the miracle : a practice too com-
mon

mon with those who make inquiries rather to establish some favorite system than for the discovery of the truth. Failing in this, they had recourse to their old argument, that since he had performed this work on the sabbath, he could not be of God; not choosing to recollect the many passages of Scripture, that "Mercy is better than sacrifice." Some, even of their own body, however, were not satisfied with this argument. They had not been able to confute the miracle: they were conscious that such works could only be done by the power of God, and that no sinner could be supposed to be intrusted with such power. Shutting their eyes, however, to these convincing arguments, they determine to make a more minute and stricter inquiry into the transaction; and accordingly send for his parents, under a pretence of disbelieving the fact.

" 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the
X x " parents

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**" parents of him that had received his
" sight.**

**" 19. And they asked them, saying, Is
" this your son, who ye say was born
" blind? how then doth he now see?**

**" 20. His parents answered them and
" said, We know that this is our son, and
" that he was born blind :**

**" 21. But by what means he now seeth,
" we know not ; or who hath opened his
" eyes, we know not : he is of age, ask
" him, he shall speak for himself.**

**" 22. These words spake his parents,
" because they feared the Jews : for the
" Jews had agreed already, that if any
" man did confess that he was Christ, he
" should be put out of the Synagogue.**

**" 23. Therefore said his parents, He is
" of age, ask him."**

When the Jews found that they could not, either by persuasion or harshness, prevail upon him that had been blind to deny the miraculous work done in him, but that he persevered boldly in his relation, and
asserted

" parents of him that had received
" sight.

" 19. And they asked them, saying
" this your son, who ye say was
" blind? how then doth he now see?"

" 20. His parents answered and
" said, We know that this is our son,
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" we know not; or who hath opened
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" 22. These words spake the Jews
" because they feared the Jews: for
" Jews had agreed already, that
" man did confess that he was Christ,
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" 23. Therefore said his parents,
" of age, ask him."

When the Jews found that they
" either by persuasion or harshness
" upon him that had been blind, and
" miraculous work done in him, but
" persevered boldly in his relation.

asserted that the person who had
it could be no less than a prophet
called his parents, in hopes, by
their conduct, to have frightened
disowning their son, or at least
nied that he was born blind.
ready answers of the parents;
they declined to enter into any
respecting the miracle, would
duced to deny their son, or
the account before given of him.
all their attempts to impose upon
ple. That these poor people
wished to avoid entering into
with those who were placed
over them, was very natural;
as the punishment of exclusion
Synagogue had been denounced
who should confess Jesus to be
It does not appear that they had
or even known any thing of
till this period; and they were
a loss themselves to account for
ful an event: they therefore
to their son, for the particular

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To avoid giving offence to the higher powers, where we do not thereby sacrifice what we owe to God or religion, is equally our duty and interest: this complaisance, however, is not to be carried one step beyond what is clearly required of us; nor will fear of the event justify us in the use of any crooked means to screen ourselves from sufferings, in the cause of religion. In all such cases, we must endeavor to bear them with patience; looking forward with hope to the reward of injured innocence which awaits us.

The manner of this poor man's life made it impossible for the Jews to deny the fact of his having been blind, or of his cure; his daily solicitations for alms must have made him generally known throughout the city: they were, therefore, reduced to the necessity of admitting the miracle; though they insulted its author.

The miserable state of poverty to which this man was reduced, instead of being a misfortune, as we should be led at first sight to consider it, became to him a blessing; as
it

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To avoid giving offence to the
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miserable state of poverty to w
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er it, became to him a blessing.

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It not only put him in a situation to
the notice of his Saviour, by which
ceived the gift of sight, but also made
an instrument of manifesting God's
to the confusion of the hypocritical
rises.

And here I cannot pass over a
advantage possessed by the Jews, as
they continued firm in the worship
God; namely, that they could not
reduced to that state of want which
frequent amongst all other people
family as well as tribe possessing a
portion of land, which by law could
be taken from them, nor could they
selves dispose of for a longer term
years; the seventh being that of
bath; when it returned to its
owner. But when they forsook their
their God, he gave both them and
possessions into the hands of strangers
and although he afterwards restored
nant of them to their country, yet, in
Babylonish captivity, they no longer
joyed this advantage, but became

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to all the disparities of fortune as the rest of the world.

“ 24. Then again called they the man
“ that was blind, and said unto him, Give
“ God the praise : we know that this man
“ is a sinner.

“ 25. He answered and said, Whether
“ he be a sinner or no, I know not : one
“ thing I know, that, whereas I was blind,
“ now I see.

“ 26. Then said they to him again,
“ What did he to thee ? how opened he
“ thine eyes ?

“ 27. He answered them, I have told
“ you already, and ye did not hear :
“ wherefore would ye hear it again ?
“ will ye also be his disciples ?”

The Jews, in desiring the man to give glory to God for the benefit he had received, gave him good advice, and what every pious person should most certainly do : we are not only bound, however, to glorify God for all his mercies vouchsafed

to

to all the disparities of fortune and of the world.

"24. Then again called *him* that was blind, and said *unto* him: God the praise: we know that *thou* is a sinner.

"25. He answered and said *unto* him: he be a sinner or no, I know not: *one* thing I know, that, whereas *thou* saidst *unto* me, *now* I see.

"26. Then said they *unto* him: What did he to thee? how opened *thou* his eyes?

"27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not believe: wherefore would ye hear *me*? will ye also be his disciples?"

The Jews, in desiring the man to go to God for the benefit he had received, gave him good advice, and every pious person should most certainly be bound, however, to thank God for all his mercies received.

to us, but we must glorify him whom he has pointed out to us. The attitude of the Jews was very different: to persuade the man that he owed his cure to the immediate instruction of the Jews, and consequently incapable of such an act; but that, without himself further about the means, rest satisfied with the effect, and thankful to God for it.

"28. Then they reviled him, saying: Thou art his disciple; but we are not his disciples.

"29. We know that God is with Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

The want of education in the Jews did not prevent his seeing the error and fallacy of their arguments; in vindicating the truth; which was the only thing necessary to the benefactor, he did, even in the

enemies. Stung to the quick at what they would term the obstinacy of the man, and feeling their pride hurt, that one so illiterate and ignorant should presume to assert an opinion different from their's, and to insinuate that they might possibly become his disciples, they grew angry, and, as is but too common, substituted abuse for arguments. It is true that, what they meant as abuse, was in fact the highest praise; but this did not alter the nature of their guilt. What greater honor or happiness can any human creature boast, than that of being a disciple and follower of Christ Jesus, and a partaker of his everlasting kingdom! Had these vain boasters been, as they pretended, the disciples of Moses, they would have been Christ's also; as Moses not only wrote of, but was himself a type of the messiah in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

“30. The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence
“ he

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ries. Stung to the quick and term the obstinacy of the men their pride hurt, that one and ignorant should prefer a opinion different from their own, that they might possess principles, they grew angry, and common, substituted arguments. It is true that, what was use, was in fact the highest use, did not alter the general

What greater honour to a human creature but to be a disciple and follower of him! Had these vain boasters pretended, the disciples could have been Christ's; not only wrote of, but were of the messiah in whom all of the earth were to be blessed.

The man answered and said, Why, herein is a marvel that ye know not from

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"he is, and yet he hath opened eyes."

"31. Now we know that God hath not sinners: but if any man worshipper of God, and doeth his will, he heareth."

"32. Since the world began was, he heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."

"33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

How strikingly just, as well as are the arguments made use of for a poor man. No education was required to point out, that God would not lend power to one who was an enemy to the law; and that, of consequence, he exercised a power which belonged alone, he must be a true and sincere worshipper of God: this was all which, present, the poor man knew; though not having as yet revealed himself as the messiah. As this mode of reasoning was convincing to himself, he

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rally expresses his astonishment that it should not produce the same effect upon them; and that they, the instructors of the people, with all their knowledge of the Scriptures, should be at a loss as to the person who was able to perform such acts as no man before him ever did.

“ 34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”

Not being able to reply to his arguments, (which were indeed unanswerable,) their fury was now raised to the utmost pitch, and they proceeded to inflict on him that punishment which they had before threatened against any one who should acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ.

This is, by no means, an uncommon practice, with those who undertake the defence of a bad cause: when overcome in argument, they have recourse to every species of abuse and injury towards the person,

rally expresses his astonishment that they should not produce the same effect on them; and that they, the rulers of the people, with all their knowledge of the Scriptures, should be at a loss to find the person who was able to perform such acts as no man before him ever did.

“ 34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether silent when they said, Thou wast altogether silent, and dost thou teach us? he answered and said unto him, out.”

Not being able to reply to their objections, (which were indeed manifestly just, and their fury was now raised to the pitch, and they proceeded to threaten him that punishment which they had threatened against any one who should acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah. This is, by no means, an unreasonable request, with those who understand the justice of a bad cause: when once they are convinced of the wrongness of their argument, they have recourse to the use of abuse and injury towards

person, (particularly if an infidel has dared to oppose truth to error). But in this they must be careful not to lose sight of their aim; as they only the more their own folly and

“ 35. Jesus heard that they sought to kill him; and when he had said unto him, Dost thou think that I am the Son of God?”

“ 36. He answered and said unto him, lord, that I might believe in thee.”

“ 37. And Jesus said unto him, hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”

“ 38. And he said, Lord, I worship thee.”

“ 39. And Jesus said, Forasmuch as thou hast believed in me, thou shalt not see me henceforth, but thou shalt see me, and which see not might see, and which see might be made blind.”

How inconsiderable do the sufferings of this poor man appear when compared with the ineffable

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of which he became the partaker: His faith in our blessed Lord, and his noble and manly defence of the truth, in opposition to all the power and learning of the Pharisees, were rewarded by the gifts of spiritual, as well as corporeal, sight; his eyes were opened to see the Saviour of the world, and grace bestowed upon him to know that this his benefactor was the true messiah, who would shew him still greater things: blessings desired in vain by many kings and prophets: as we may read in the tenth chapter of St. Luke, verse 23.—“ And he turned him unto his
“ disciples and said privately, Blessed are
“ the eyes which see the things that ye see:
“ for I tell you, That many prophets and
“ kings have desired to see those things
“ which ye see, and have not seen them;
“ and to hear those things which ye hear,
“ and have not heard them.”

Little indeed had he to regret that he was expelled from the Jewish Synagogue, when he was in consequence admitted into the community of our Lord and his disciples.

“ 40. And

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which he became the partaker
th in our blessed Lord, and is
d manly defence of the truth.
on to all the power and leav
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have not heard them.”
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elled from the Jewish Synagogue
was in consequence admitted
nunity of our Lord and his disci-

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“ 40. And some of the Pharisees
“ were with him heard these words
“ said unto him, Are we blind also
“ 41. Jesus said unto them,
“ were blind, ye should have no fault
“ now ye say, We see; therefore
“ remaineth.”

The Pharisees, perceiving that
hypocrisy would not avail with
applied what he said, respecting the
of his coming into the world, to
selves. To accuse them of being
tually blind, was to wound their
tenderest part; as they held them-
selves out as the greatest lights of the
church, and would have had it
that all their pretended sanctity
proceeded from the heart, and was
fore acceptable with God. Well-
fore, might their pride take the
when they found themselves exposed
their followers, in their true colors
asserting their thorough knowledge
Scriptures, they condemned the

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and proved their own spiritual blindness ; since to know and pervert their meaning is much more criminal, as well as dangerous, than total ignorance : the latter may be remedied, by application and study ; the former, generally, proves inveterate. 

Let us, from the example of these self-conceited and hypocritical Pharisees, learn to avoid all spiritual pride ! Let us search the holy Scriptures, with a sincere and pious purpose, to make ourselves acquainted with their sacred truths ; begging God's blessing that, through the influence of his holy spirit, our endeavors may be successful ; and that they may sink so deeply into our hearts, as to bring forth the fruits of eternal life ; through the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

CHAPTER

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and proved their own spiritual blindness to know and pervert their own much more criminal, as well as dangerous, than total ignorance: it may be remedied, by applying the remedy; the former, generally, is incurable.

Let us, from the example of the Pharisees, avoid all spiritual pride! Let us read the holy Scriptures, with a humble and devout purpose, to make ourselves acquainted with their sacred truths, and by God's blessing that, through the influence of his holy spirit, our hearts may be successful; and that they may be so deeply into our hearts, as to be the fruits of eternal life; the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

CHAPTER

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

ST. JOHN, CHAP. 1

- " 1. **V**ERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same shall be a thief and a robber.
- " 2. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep.
- " 3. To him the porter of the sheep hear his voice: and he openeth the door, and he putteth in his own sheep by name, and he leadeth them out.
- " 4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

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“ 5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

How beautiful, as well as just, is the comparison here drawn, of the care and attention of our Saviour to helpless mortals, with that of a shepherd to his flock! Ever attentive to their wants, he, like the shepherd, is constantly at hand, to guide and conduct them through life, and to guard them against all dangers.

‘The sheep-fold’ means, the church of God: “the door by which we are to enter,” is Christ himself. The outward and visible sign of our admission, is water; wherein we are baptized, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

“ 6. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. . . .”

“ 7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. . . .”

“ 8. All . . .”

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5. And a stranger will they not receive; but will flee from him: he knoweth not the voice of strangers.

How beautiful, as well as how useful, is the parable of the sheep-fold here drawn, of the conduct of our Saviour to his disciples, with that of a shepherd to his flock, attentive to their wants, and ready to conduct them through all dangers. The 'sheep-fold' means, the church; 'the door by which we enter' is Christ himself. The visible sign of our admission, is baptism; we are baptized, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This parable spake Jesus unto them, which understood not what things he said unto them. Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

"8. All that ever came before me, I have received them: but the thieves and robbers: but the sheep do not hear them.

"9. I am the door: by me if a man will enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

"10. The thief cometh not, but he that is the good shepherd, he shall give his life for the sheep, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

"11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Our Lord, in this and other parables, paints the Scribes and Pharisees, (who corrupted the law of Moses and the people by their vain and abstruse doctrines) in their true colors; and that was more likely to make an impression upon them, than if he had been contented and openly reproving them: for their pride and obstinacy would not have confessed it, yet it is impossible that they could have heard these parables.

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applying them to themselves and suffering under the upbraidings of their own consciences. There is a striking resemblance between the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees, and that of the priests and teachers of the people, in the time of the prophet Jeremiah; who, in the twenty-third chapter and first and second verses, thus prophesies of them: "Woe be unto
" the pastors that destroy and scatter the
" sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.
" Therefore thus saith the Lord God of
" Israel against the pastors that feed my
" people; Ye have scattered my flock,
" and driven them away, and have not
" visited them: behold, I will visit upon
" you the evil of your doings, saith the
" Lord."

May the Almighty grant that these threatenings may neither be merited nor accomplished, either in this or any future age of the world, for the sake both of the pastor and of the flock! Such must be the sincere prayer of every true Christian.

Our

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lying them to themselves and under the upbraidings of the sciences. There is a striking difference between the conduct of the Pharisees, and that of the shepherds of the people, in the words of Jeremiah; who, in the chapter and first and second prophecies of them: "Woe be to the pastors that destroy and scatter the flock of my pasture! therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that have scattered the flock; Ye have scattered the sheep, ye have driven them away, and have not sought them: behold, I will visit the evil of your doings, saith the Lord."

the Almighty grant that our prayers may neither be despised nor despised, either in this or any other part of the world, for the sake of the pastor and of the flock! in the sincere prayer of every

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

Our Lord again repeats, as if to it the more strongly on our minds, is the door by which alone we are admitted into God's favor. Still ever, this would be insufficient; having entered into the right door, we must pursue that path which our heavenly shepherd has so clearly pointed out in his Gospel.

We learn from the Acts of the Apostles (chap. v. ver. 36. 37.) that, at the time when the messiah was expected, several different persons offered themselves to the people under that character, endeavoring to beguile and lead them from the right way, to the endangering of eternal salvation.

As no loss is to be compared to our soul, such wicked impostors must justly be considered as the worst of thieves and robbers; but 'the good shepherd seeketh his sheep into peaceful and secure pastures; provideth for all their wants; and even lays down his life for their sake.'

How truly applicable is this to our blessed Lord; who not only gave up his life to reconcile us to his offended Father, but has left us, in the Scriptures, a constant and plentiful supply of heavenly food, and the refreshing streams of his holy spirit to render that food efficacious to our salvation.

Before I quit this part of the subject, I must be allowed to observe another remarkable beauty and propriety in the application of the parable we are now considering, and the lessons we ought to derive from it.

The disciples of Christ are here described under the character of sheep; the most harmless, inoffensive and patient animals in the creation; which, when carried to the slaughter, or before the shearers, are ‘dumb and make no resistance.’

Such ought to be the character of every Christian: he should be distinguished for meekness, humility, and gentleness of manners; the friend of peace, and enemy of strife. Were this always the case, how
greatly

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greatly would it contribute to the
perity and happiness of society!
we may do all in our power to
desirable an end, let us be very at-
tentive both in our words and actions,
are generally esteemed as trifles:
putes and affronts much oftener
from things of little or no conse-
quence than from matters of the greatest
importance. To be always ready to
ourselves affronted, or ill-used, a
smallness of mind: true greatness
will teach us equally to avoid giving
offence, or to suppose an offence
ourselves. When we are really
the first step we ought to take is,
consider whether we may not have given
for it; and if we find we have been
least in fault, it then becomes us to
our own misconduct: thus shall we
benefit from those who are our enemies.
The next point to be considered
we ought to conduct ourselves
towards those who have, without cause, con-
sidered us an injury. And here

again recommend, to every Christian, the amiable example of his Lord and Master—that very pattern of meekness; who, ‘when he was reviled, reviled not again.’ May it not, also, be worth consideration, whether our offended honor would not be more completely satisfied, and our triumph greater, by nobly forgiving those who have offended us, than by pursuing the dictates of resentment. Sure I am, that such a conduct will procure us a lasting peace of mind; whereas revenge, sweet as some people may think it, is at best but the gratification of a moment, and never fails to leave a sting behind it. Violent and revengeful people, certainly, cannot be said to resemble sheep: how then, except they use their utmost endeavors to correct these vices, can they expect to be numbered with Christ’s disciples, whom he emphatically styles ‘his sheep.’ This forgiving disposition should be particularly extended to our offending brethren: the utmost tenderness should be employed towards such stray sheep as may have quitted the fold

fold, in hopes of alluring them back. Few occasions call for severity. (

**“ 12. But he that is an hireling, and
“ not the shepherd, whose own the sheep
“ are not, seeth the wolf coming, and
“ leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the
“ wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the
“ sheep.**

**“ 13. The hireling fleeth, because he
“ is an hireling, and careth not for the
“ sheep.”**

**Those who undertake the sacred trust
of the care of souls, or, in the language of
the parable, of ‘a shepherd,’ for the sake of
temporal advantage only, without any
spiritual motive, will, in every situation of
danger, take care of themselves and leave
their flock to the mercy of the wolf, or
their spiritual enemy who goes about
seeking whom he may devour; nor will
such pastor or shepherd, at any time, take
proper care of his flock, but leave them
to stray at large.**

Such

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Such will naturally be the conduct of an hireling, or one who considers himself as having no interest in the flock.

“ 14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

“ 15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

“ 16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

“ 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

“ 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Though short-sighted man cannot discern the hypocrite from the true Christian,
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Such will naturally be the case of an hireling, or one who confides as having no interest in the flock.

" 14. I am the good shepherd: I know my sheep, and am known of them."

" 15. As the Father knoweth me, so knoweth the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

" 16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them will I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd."

" 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep: I might take it again."

" 18. No man taketh it from me: I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Though short-sighted man cannot see the hypocrite from the true Christ,

our Lord, to whom the secret is opened, knoweth his own sheep, by faith, both know him. It was the will of the Father that the Son should lay down his life for the redemption of mankind; and the will of the Father, so was it the will of the Son: the sacrifice was voluntary: for tho' the malice of the Jews were made use of for effecting God's gracious purpose, unless it had been the will of the Lord to give up his life (and he tells us his 'Father loved me'), he could have had no power over them. This is the most astonishing instance of love to fall both in Father and Son, that cannot be conceived by the human mind. The 'sheep' here alluded to, are those who were to be converted and gathered into 'onefold' with such of the Jews.

" 19. There was a division again among the Jews for
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“ 20. And many of them said, He hath
“ a devil, and is mad ; why hear ye him ?

“ 21. Others said, These are not the
“ words of him that hath a devil. Can a
“ devil open the eyes of the blind ?”

Some of the Jews believed our Lord to
be a great prophet : this enraged the dis-
believers to that degree, that they again
reverted to their former assertion, which
they constantly made whenever they were
at a loss for arguments : that ‘ he had a
devil, and was mad.’ This was not only the
most absurd, but wicked and dangerous
conduct, they could have been guilty of.
Our Lord plainly declares this to be the
fin against the Holy Ghost (St. Mark
chap. iii. ver. 28. 29. 30.) : “ Verily I say
“ unto you, All sins shall be forgiven un-
“ to the sons of men, and blasphemies where-
“ with soever they shall blaspheme :
“ he that shall blaspheme against
“ the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness,
“ and is in danger of eternal damnation.
“ cause they said, He hath an unclean f

The attributing the miracles of our Saviour to the power of the devil, was a sin of such magnitude, as to draw from him the strongest expression of his indignation. Let us, therefore, be constantly upon our guard, that we may not draw down upon ourselves so dreadful a calamity: let us cast far from us all manner of sin; and, especially, let us avoid such as are here declared to be, of a nature not to be forgiven. We know not when we may be called upon to give an account; numbers being daily summoned before our eyes, without warning; but this we know, that there is no repentance in the grave; and, therefore, that it behoves us, like the wise virgins in Scripture, to have our lamps constantly trimmed, that, when the Bridegroom cometh, we may be in a state of preparation.

“ 22. And it was at Jerusalem the feast
“ of The Dedication; and it was winter.

“ 23. And Jesus walked in the Temple,
“ in Solomon's porch.

Aaa 2

“ 24. Then

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“ 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

“ 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me :

“ 26. But ye believe not ; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

It appears, from the above verses, that an annual day of thanksgiving was set apart to God for his great mercy to the Jews, in permitting them to re-build the Temple after their return from the Babylonish captivity. It is probable, that Ezra, Zorobabel, and Nehemiah, strictly enjoined the observance of it, as long as the Temple itself should continue.

The Jews, upon this occasion as on many others, endeavored to draw from our Lord an explicit declaration that he was the messiah, that they might accuse him to the Roman state, (which would admit

“ 24. Then came the Jews round
him, and said unto him, How can
thou make us to doubt? If thou
Christ, tell us plainly.
Jesus answered them, I have

“ 24. Then came the Jews round
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Christ, tell us plainly.
 " 25. Jesus answered them, and ye believed not: the works which I do in my Father's name, these witness of me:
 But ye believe not, because ye will not receive me:

“ 26. But ye believe not; ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

It appears, from the above text, that the annual day of thanksgiving is due to God for his great mercies, in permitting them to re-enter the temple after their return from Babylonish captivity. It is probable that Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah, and the multitude of the Jews, who had obtained the observance of it, assembled on this occasion.

ained the observance of
Temple itself should continue.
The Jews, upon this occasion
others, endeavored to draw
ord an explicit declaration
he messiah, that they might
o the Roman state, (which was

OUR BLESSED SAVI

admit of no competitor in power they claimed over the who set himself up for a king annexed a temporal king character: but here again appointed, by our Lord's to his works in proof of his This was so unanswerable support of his pretensions, fible either to deny the which daily passed before attribute them to nature Jews were always driven over it was made use of

" 27. My sheep hear
" know them, and the

" 28. And I give
" nal life; and they
" neither shall any
" of my hand.

" 29. My Father
" is greater than all
" to pluck them out

" 30. I and my

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The true servants of Christ hear his voice in his holy word and sacraments, and cheerfully follow him through this world, looking forward to that crown of glory which he has provided for them; and which, we are here assured, no power (if they continue faithful) can deprive them of.

“ 31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

“ 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

“ 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

“ 34. Jesus answereth them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

“ 35. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken,)

“ 36. Say ye of him whom the Father
“ hath

THE LIFE AND DEATH

The true servants of Christ receive in his holy word and sacraments cheerfully follow him through the world, looking forward to that glory which he has provided for them, which, we are here assured, they continue faithful) and of.

31. Then the Jews took him and went to stone him.

2. Jesus answered them, How good works have I shewed you from heaven; for which of those works do ye stone me?

3. The Jews answered him, because a good work we stone thee not; blasphemy; and because thou art a man, makest thyself God.

Jesus answereth them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

If he called them gods, of whom the word of God came (and the Father cannot be broken,)

Say ye of him whom the Father

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"hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest! because I said, the son of God?"

"37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

"38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

"39. Therefore they sought to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

"40. And went away again to Jordan, into the place where he was first baptized; and there he abode.

The arguments here made up by our blessed Saviour, in reply to those who were about to stone him, and which they called blasphemy, are so weak and strong and clear, as to need no comment. That the Jews felt them so, is evident, since, instead of attempting to answer them, they resorted to the usual method with violent and obstinate people, and

employment of force, where argument had failed: but in this attempt they succeeded no better than they had done upon former occasions. Till our Lord chose to deliver himself into their hands, they had no power at all over him, and might with as much chance of success have striven with the wind: this they must have known, had they made use of the inestimable advantages they enjoyed over the rest of the world, in being the depositaries of the word of God.

Some of the saints and prophets who were intrusted with God's law, and were invested with authority to execute his will, are, in the Old Testament, styled 'Gods;' as having the power from God himself to perform supernatural acts: (Psalm lxxxii. ver. 6. 7.) "I have said, Ye are gods; and
 "all of you are children of the Most High.
 "But ye shall die like men, and fall like
 "one of the princes." In this psalm, David reminds these exalted and highly-favored characters, that they were equally subject to death with the most ignorant
 and

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employment of force, where they failed: but in this attempt they were no better than they had been on other occasions. Till our Lord delivered himself into their hands, he had no power at all over him, and as much chance of success as a man with the wind: this was known, had they made use of the able advantages they enjoyed in the midst of the world, in being the servants of the word of God. The power of the saints and prophets entrusted with God's law, and armed with authority to execute the Old Testament, styled by God the power from God in supernatural acts: (Psalms 7.) "I have said, Ye are gods: you are children of the Most High, ye shall die like men, and be like of the princes." In this passage of minds these exalted and holy characters, that they were to die death with the most glorious

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and insignificant of their species; ritual pride should prevent them from attainment of that state of future blessedness which they were teaching others to acquire. St. Paul thought the watch over himself absolutely neglected, whilst he was teaching others, himself should be a castaway. If, then, so highly favored thought himself safe without keeping a constant watch over himself, how incumbent it is on every Christian to follow his example more particularly where any extraordinary gifts of the holy spirit have been bestowed on him. The Jews had excuse to plead for their infidelity, had the justest grounds of faith in Christ as the messiah, or son of God (terms made use of in Scripture to denote one and the same person); since he formed all that the prophets had respecting that sacred character: these very Jews would have been offended, had any one presumed to deny their knowledge of, or faith in,

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Scriptures: but inconsistency is the inseparable attendant upon obstinacy and error.

John the Baptist having prepared the hearts of those whom he baptized to receive Jesus Christ and his doctrines, our Lord, whose time of quitting the world now drew near, thought proper to visit those whose minds were in some measure enlightened; that, by witnessing his miracles, they might be convinced that he was the person of whom John spake, and become bright and early examples of true faith in him and his glorious Gospel.

“ 41. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

“ 42. And many believed on him there.”

John performed no miracle; but foretold all those wonders which would astonish the world when wrought by his Master.

This

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but inconsistency is attendant upon obli-

Baptist having power over those whom he baptizes. Christ and his disciples, at the time of quitting the world, near, thought proper to leave minds were in some measure; that, by witnessing to the night be convinced of the truth of whom John spoke, and his early examples of his and his glorious Gospel.

and many resorted unto him. John did no miracle: but John spake of this man.

and many believed on him.

med no miracle; but he wrought wonders which would be wrought by his Master.

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This difference of character was not to prevent the disciples of John from taking him for the messiah.

Some of the prophets, of old, had permitted to work miracles; but supernatural power had been forbidden from the time of Malachi to that of the Baptist: a period of between two and four hundred years. Those miracles, therefore, performed by our Lord, have appeared the more conspicuous, and consequently have made a greater impression upon the minds of his followers.

May the Almighty, of his mercy, increase our faith, and not only strengthen Christians who are the least wavering in sincere and steady faith, but encourage nations to Christianity, that we may become one universal flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ, our only saviour, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory without end. Amen.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XI.

“ 1. **N**OW a certain man was sick,
“ named Lazarus, of Bethany,
“ the town of Mary and her sister Mar-
“ tha.

“ 2. (It was that Mary which anointed
“ the Lord with ointment, and wiped his
“ feet with her hair, whose brother La-
“ zarus was sick.)

“ 3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him,
“ saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou
“ lovest is sick.

“ 4. When Jesus heard that, he said,
“ This sickness is not unto death, but for
“ the glory of God, that the Son of God
“ might be glorified thereby.

“ 5. Now

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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

"5. Now Jesus loved Martha
" sister, and Lazarus."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEEN

ST. JOHN, CHAP. I.

NOW a certain man
named Lazarus, who
own of Mary and her sister

(It was that Mary which an-
ord with ointment, and wiped
with her hair, whose brother
was sick.)

Therefore his sisters sent unto
him, Lord, behold, he whom
is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he
sickness is not unto death, but
of God, that the Son of Man
be glorified thereby.

The relation contained in this
is, on many accounts, so extror-
dinary, and the attachment of our
Lord to the family in whose
power was so eminently called for
so distinguished a nature, that I
I trust, be considered as foreign
subject, if I bring together in
all the particulars which the
furnish us with, respecting the
tenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.
We are informed that our Lord, on
his journey, entered a certain villa-
ge, where a woman, named Martha, re-
ceived him into her house, and, desirous of
every honor to her guest, im-
mediately about to provide for him eve-
ry accommodation it afforded; but Mary
being anxious not to lose the
opportunity of profiting by
the instruction offered her, went and
sat down at Jesus's feet, and gave

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attention to his discourse. Martha, finding the whole business of the house left upon her, and offended at her sister's apparent neglect, comes to our Lord and complains of it, desiring that he would direct her to take a share in the labor. Jesus takes the opportunity of pointing out to her, but with the greatest mildness, that she troubled herself too much about worldly affairs, thereby losing the advantage of spiritual improvement, whilst her sister, of whom she complained, had adopted a much more acceptable method of shewing her regard to him, by an earnest desire of receiving instruction from his lips: thereby intimating, that the indulgences of this world, which he came to wean mankind in a great measure from, are not to be put in competition with the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. This affords a lesson to all Christians, to set their affections on things above, and not on earthly things.

The further particulars of this visit, are not related; but, we may reasonably suppose,

pose, from the foregoing account of the amiable conduct of the two sisters, that Martha received with respect the admonition of our Lord, and that they both strove to render his stay with them useful to themselves. It is probable, also, that he now became acquainted with their brother, Lazarus, and formed that friendship and attachment to the whole family which is here recorded by St. John. Happy family! to be so eminently distinguished by the affection of their Lord and Saviour. —

Let us now return to the chapter before us.

Upon the occasion of their brother's sickness, the sisters immediately make application to their all-powerful Friend; having no doubt but his love for Lazarus would induce him to afford him relief: nor were they deceived, although, for the wisest purposes, he left them awhile to struggle with their sorrows.

“ 6. When

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“ 6. When he had heard, therefore, that
“ he was sick, he abode two days still in
“ the same place where he was.”

Our Lord did not immediately hasten to the relief of his distressed friends, in order that the assistance he designed to afford them might manifest in a still higher degree the power of God ; that both Father and Son might be glorified thereby. We should learn from this, that we are not to suppose our petitions rejected, because they are not immediately granted : it may be more for the honor of God, and even for our own benefit, that the boon we ask should be deferred ; nay, so short-sighted are we to our own real interests, and so little do we know what we ought to ask, that, perhaps, the rejection of our petition, altogether, may be the greatest mercy the Almighty can shew us.

Our blessed Lord prepares his disciples to expect some very extraordinary event from this illness of Lazarus ; something that would surprize the beholders and
force

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When he had heard, therefore, that Lazarus was sick, he abode two days in the same place where he was.

Our Lord did not immediately give relief of his distressed state, that the assistance he desired might manifest in a full manner the power of God; that he and his Son might be glorified, and we might learn from this, that our petitions are not immediately granted, but are more for the honor of God than for our own benefit, that our request should be deferred: and that we are indebted to our own weakness, and so little do we know what to ask, that, perhaps, the most merciful petition, altogether, may be answered by the Almighty can be answered. Our blessed Lord prepares his answer to some very extraordinary circumstances of the illness of Lazarus; some which will surprise the beholder.

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force them to glorify the Almighty Father is glorified, when his Son is glorified; and Christ is glorified when his divine power is made manifest, so that he may delight in acknowledging himself the only Son of God, and the only Redeemer of mankind.

"7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again."

"8. His disciples say unto him, Thou knowest that the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?"

"9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If I walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world."

"10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

The disciples could not help their surprise, that our Lord should propose going again into Judea, where he had so lately sought his life:

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he tells them, that he was as safe from the hatred and malice of the Jews, till the time appointed, as a man would be from stumbling who walked with the greatest care and watchfulness during the day, and never attempted to walk in the night. The expression 'twelve hours,' seems to be a figurative method of describing that portion of time our Lord chose to continue upon earth; which was, till he had performed every thing which the prophets had foretold of him; completing the work for which he became man; and fulfilling all his Father's will.

God grant that we may all follow the example of our blessed Saviour, by making the best use of that time which the Almighty has intrusted to our care! that we may not 'stumble in the night,' or, in other words, go down to the grave before we have performed all the work which our heavenly Father will require at our hands: for, as we know not how soon we may be called to give up our stewardship, we should at all times be
ready

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tells them, that he was as hated and malice of the Jews appointed, as a man working who walked with them and watchfulness during the night attempted to walk in the same expression 'twelve hours' a figurative method of denoting the time our Lord chose to spend upon earth; which was accomplished every thing which was foretold of him; concerning which for which he became obedient unto all his Father's will. grant that we may all follow the best use of that time which he has intrusted to our care: that we may not 'stumble in the night' as he says, go down to the grave: we have performed all the will of our heavenly Father will require of us: for, as we know not when we may be called to give up our souls, we should at all times

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ready for the summons. The disciples were not excused because the groom came unexpectedly: we are to watch, and be constantly prepared for death; as it may overtake us at any time. Christians, who are in the light of their Master's glorious gospel and direct them, have no excuse to plead, should they stumble and

"11. These things said he unto them, that he saith unto them, Our Lord is asleep; but I go, to awake him out of sleep.

"12. Then said his disciple unto him, If he sleep, he shall do well.

"13. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his Father; but they thought that he said of his taking of rest in sleep.

"14. Then said Jesus unto them, My friend, Lazarus is dead.

"15. And I am glad for you, that I was not there, to the end that you may believe; nevertheless, I am glad that I am now here, unto him.

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“ 16. Then said Thomas, which is call-
“ ed Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples,
“ Let us also go, that we may die with
“ him.”

Sleep is so true a picture of death, that death in Scripture is often called sleep : the disciples, therefore, might naturally have concluded that Lazarus was dead; when our Lord said he would go and awake him ; since it could never be supposed the office of a friend to wake the sick when enjoying the repose of sleep : but their faith not being yet sufficiently established, to suppose their Master meant to recal him from the grave, they put a literal construction upon his words.

Jesus finding this to be the case, tells them, in plain terms, that Lazarus was dead ; and that, on their account, it was matter of satisfaction to him that he had not been there ; because, by the wonderful work he should now have to perform, their faith in him must of necessity receive the fullest confirmation. He then de-
clares

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men said Thomas, which was, unto his fellow-disciples, that we may be

to true a picture of the scripture is often called, therefore, might have decided that Lazarus was dead. Lord said he would go, since it could never be the of a friend to be joying the repose of his, h not being yet sufficient suppose their Master was from the grave, they put their confidence upon his words. This to be the case, in other terms, that Lazarus was dead, on their account, it was a satisfaction to him that he had ; because, by the wonder would now have to perform a must of necessity receive confirmation. He then declared

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declares his intention of going to him. Jesus foresaw all the danger of returning into Judea, where the Jews had sought the life of his Master ; but receiving that it was his determination to sacrifice all meaner consideration of friendship, proposes to his disciples the noble resolution of exposing themselves to all dangers, even to the hazard of their lives, rather than to follow him : a resolution which, we have to suppose from what followed, they unanimously adopted.

The manners and conduct of our Saviour, to all who were connected with him, must have attracted their utmost respect and veneration ; and we accordingly find that, except in one instance, which was to have been permitted for the purpose of checking the presumption of his disciples, all his disciples (save Judas) invariably adhered to him ; and, in that instance, their repentance was more sudden than sincere.

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Let those who would wish to be loved, rather than feared, follow the example of their blessed Lord; and, instead of that pride and arrogance with which too many are apt to treat their dependants and inferiors, let them conduct themselves towards such, with mildness and consideration, allowing for the frailties of human nature, and reproving them when necessary with gentleness and moderation; recollecting that we are all children of the same Parent, and servants of the same Master, and that we must expect to be dealt with by him in the same manner as we have dealt with others.

“ 17. Then when Jesus came, he found
“ that he had lain in the grave four days
“ already.

“ 18. (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.)

“ 19. And many of the Jews came to
“ Martha and Mary, to comfort them
“ concerning their brother.

“ 20. Then

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those who would with to be
 n feared, follow the ex-
 led Lord; and, in his
 arrogance with which he
 treat their dependants
 t them conduct them
 th, with mildness and
 owing for the frailties
 re, and reproving us
 with gentleness and
 g that we are all sinners
 nt, and servants of the
 d that we must expect
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men when Jesus came, he
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ow Bethany was eight
 bout fifteen furlongs of
 d many of the Jews came
 and Mary, to comfort
 their brother.

"20. 13"

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"20. Then Martha, as soon
 "heard that Jesus was coming, w
 "met him: but Mary sat still
 "house."

When Jesus arrived in the nei-
 hood of Bethany, Lazarus had
 the grave four days, and the nea-
 that place to Jerusalem (it not bei-
 than a mile and three-quarters
 from it) had brought great num-
 the Jews from thence, to comf-
 sifiers: his death, of course, mu-
 been well known at Jerusalem; an-
 the presence of so many of the inh-
 of that place at the miracle our L-
 about to perform, the fame of it
 naturally be spread over the who-
 and add greatly to the number of
 believers. The custom amongst
 for the friends of the family to
 and mourn with those who had
 relation, was of ancient date, as
 from Scripture; and the length
 mournings, and the number of the

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ers, must have depended in some measure upon the rank and consequence of the departed person.

“ 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus,
“ Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

“ 22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

“ 23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

“ 24. Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

“ 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;

“ 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

“ 27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world:

“ 28. And

ers, must have depended in part upon the rank and consequence of the departed person.

“ 21. Then said Martha
“ Lord, if thou hadst been here,
“ ther had not died.

“ 22. But I know, that even now
“ soever thou wilt ask of God, he
“ give it thee.

“ 23. Jesus saith unto her,
“ shall rise again.

“ 24. Martha said unto him,
“ that he shall rise again in the
“ at the last day.

“ 25. Jesus said unto her, I am
“ resurrection, and the life: he that
“ eth in me, though he were dead,
“ shall he live;

“ 26. And whosoever liveth in
“ I live in me, shall never die. Be-
“ thou this?

“ 27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord,
“ believe that thou art the Christ, the
“ son of God, which should come into the world.

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“ 28. And when she had
“ went her way, and called
“ sister secretly, saying, The
“ come, and calleth for thee.”

Although Martha's faith
some degree deficient, upon
occasion, in supposing our L
diate presence necessary to ha
brother's life, yet it was, upon
so strong in conceiving it to l
power to restore him, that Je
notice of its imperfection:
intention to confirm it.

Our Lord compassionate
mities, errors, and distresses
and never fails to remove the
sometimes, by slow and almo
tible degrees: this disbelief
and say that God has forsake
servants, when he is only
mercies for their good, as on
occasion; for although Chri
restore Lazarus to life, he l
present to have turned M
Ddd

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upon the general resurrection, to draw from her a full profession of her belief: this we may suppose from her reply, that she knew that her brother would rise again at the last day. This was no new doctrine amongst the Jews; though the Sadducees, who were a peculiar sect, denied it. Our Lord then leads Martha's thoughts from the general resurrection towards the wonderful and particular resurrection he was going to bring about in the person of her brother, by declaring to her, that he himself was 'the resurrection and the life;' that is, that the power of life and death was his, and that he could call any one out of the grave to a renewed existence, and, this notwithstanding, the general resurrection was fixed to the last day. Having thus asserted his miraculous power, he calls on Martha to confess her belief in it, before he would raise her brother from the dead, to point out to her that faith was a necessary preparation to entitle her to the benefit he meant to confer on her by working so great a miracle. Our Lord,

upon the general resurrection from her a full profession of this we may suppose from her she knew that her brother was again at the last day. This doctrine amongst the Jews and Sadducees, who were a people denied it. Our Lord then has his thoughts from the general resurrection he was going to bring a person of her brother, by declaring that he himself was 'the resurrection and the life;' that is, that the power of death was his, and that he could bring one out of the grave to a resurrection, and, this notwithstanding, his resurrection was fixed to the last day. Having thus asserted his miraculous power, he calls on Martha to confess her brother dead, to point out to her the necessity of preparation to receive the benefit he meant to confer by working so great a miracle.

Lord, on another occasion, did he could not work many miracles in his own country, because of the unbelief of his countrymen. Martha manifested her steady faith that the Son of God which should come into the world, goes privately to fetch Mary; telling her, that 'thou shalt see him and come.'

"29. As soon as she heard, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

"30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that country where Martha met him.

"31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and came with her when they saw Mary, that she came hastily, and went out, following her. She goeth unto the grave, and wept there.

"32. Then when Mary was weeping, Jesus was, and saw her, and said unto her, Mary, Mary. She answered him, saying, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But now I am troubled, because I have heard that thou art here, but my brother is dead.

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“ thou hadst been here, my brother had
“ not died.

“ 33. When Jesus, therefore, saw her
“ weeping, and the Jews also weeping
“ which came with her, he groaned in the
“ spirit and was troubled,

“ 34. And said, Where have ye laid
“ him? They say unto him, Lord, come
“ and see.

“ 35. Jesus wept.”

As soon as Mary received from her sister the intelligence of our Lord's approach, she repaired to him, and addressed herself to him, under every symptom of the deepest affliction; lamenting, as Martha had done, that he had not been present, as that might have prevented the death of her brother. How striking is the conduct of our Lord! and in how amiable a light does he appear, throughout the whole of this interesting transaction!

Instead of the severe philosopher, who would wish to destroy the best and most
genuine

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thou hadst been here, my brother, thou hadst not died.

“33. When Jesus, therefore, was weeping, and the Jews which came with her, he gave no sign, his spirit and was troubled,

34. And said, Where is thy brother? They say unto him, Lazarus, and see.

35. Jesus wept.”

As soon as Mary received the intelligence of our Lord's death, she repaired to him, and was with him, under every deepest affliction; lamenting, as if he had done, that he had not been as that might have prevented the death of her brother. How little does the conduct of our Lord! and how little does he appear, in the whole of this interesting conduct.

And of the severe philosophy which wish to destroy the best and

genuine feelings of our hearts, we as the friend and companion of man, entering into all their feelings, and participating in all their distresses. The Saviour of the world, the great Lord of the universe, in the fulness of his power, touched at the affliction of sufferers; and, giving way to the feelings of that nature which he had condescended to take on himself, is troubled, and groans in spirit! He who could without a tear, to the most agonizing pains in his own person, to make atonement for the guilt of others, weep over the sufferings of his fellow-mortals! His tears! which will for ever sanctify the most amiable feelings of our nature, in all the arguments of hard-hearted philosophers: nor, after such an instance, can it be deemed any impeachment of his patience and resignation to the will of the Father should we, under severe trials, express our sense of them in tears and lamentations. All that seems to be required in such cases, is, that we should not

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sorrow to get the better of our reason, so as to incapacitate us for the performance of our duties, or grieve as persons without hope.

Let us, however, carefully avoid the error which too many are apt to fall into—the making troubles of trifles : which, as an evidence of an unthankful and discontented disposition of mind, must be highly displeasing to our all-bountiful and merciful God.

“ 36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him !

“ 37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died ?

“ 38. Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

“ 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh : for he hath been dead four days.

“ 40. Jesus

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Jesus said, Take ye away

Martha, the sister of his
d, faith unto him, Lord,

stinketh: for he hath been
dead four days.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

" 40. Jesus saith unto her,
unto thee, that, if thou wouldst
thou shouldest see the glory of

The surprize expressed by the
had been witnesses upon former
interesting occasions, that the
nature were under his contro-
tremely natural: they perceived
greatly he loved Lazarus, and
conceive why he should suffer
so immature a death, when he
restored him by a word. They
aware that our Lord had other
objects in view, than the indul-
gence of his own feelings; namely, the glo-
ry and benefit of mankind. So
the Jews were, probably from the
stance, led to suppose that he
exercised this miraculous power
but only on particular occasio-
ns under certain influences. If such
supposition, they must soon
be convinced of their error. It
was the design of our blessed

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change the scene before him, from the deepest affliction to the utmost joy; yet it afforded too just a picture of the sufferings of mankind to be seen by him unmoved, and drew from him expressions of pity and concern.

Although Martha had at first expressed her conviction, that whatever Jesus should ask of the Father, he would give it him, yet, now that the awful and astonishing event was about to take place, her faith begins to waver, and she requires to be reminded by our Lord of his former assurances to her. This appears by her objecting to the removal of the stone, in consequence of his having been so long dead.

“ 41. Then they took away the stone
“ from the place where the dead was laid.
“ And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said,
“ Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard
“ me.

“ 42. And I knew that thou hearest
“ me always; but because of the people
“ which

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And I knew that thou hadst
rays ; but because of the

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

" which stand by I said it, that t
" believe that thou hast sent me.

" 43. And when he thus had
" he cried with a loud voice, I
" come forth !

" 44. And he that was dead can
" bound hand and foot with grave-
" and his face was bound about
" napkin. Jesus saith unto them
" him, and let him go."

The removal of the stone fr
grave, and the other ceremonies
by our Saviour upon the present c
could not have been necessary to
formance of the miracle ; but ou
in this as on most other occasions
scended to our weaknesses. The
great numbers present, who all k
circumstances of Lazarus's death,
to have determined to make the
of his resurrection so clear and ob
the senses, as to leave no possible
to cavil at, or dispute it. Had
come forth from the tomb, with
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stone having been removed, some of the spectators might have thought that it was his spirit they had seen, and that his body still remained in the grave ; but when they saw him in the tomb, and saw him arise from thence in his burial-clothes, as they had deposited him there, it was impossible to raise the shadow of a doubt. A single word, nay, even a thought, of our Lord, would have restored him to life ; but that all present might see and know that the dead heard his voice, he calls to Lazarus, with a loud voice, to ‘ come forth :’ the order was instantly obeyed ; and his declaration to Martha fully established, when he said, ‘ I am the resurrection and the life.’

Another part of our Saviour’s conduct upon this occasion, is very striking, and well deserving our notice.

Though one with the Father, and possessing all the power of the God-head, he makes public profession of his thanks to him, thereby teaching us not only to lift up our eyes and hearts to him, in all our wants and distresses, but to make our
grateful

stone having been removed, the spectators might have thought his spirit they had seen, and that he still remained in the grave. As they saw him in the tomb, and arise from thence in his burial-clothes, they had deposited him there, it was possible to raise the shadow of a single word, nay, even a thought, would have restored him to all present might see and hear. Had he heard his voice, he called out with a loud voice, to "come forth." He was instantly obeyed; and he came on to Martha fully established, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life." No other part of our Saviour's teaching on this occasion, is very strikingly deserving our notice. Though one with the Father, he manifested all the power of the God-head in his public profession of his divinity, thereby teaching us not only to fix our eyes and hearts to him, in all our afflictions and distresses, but to make him

grateful acknowledgments to him for the favors he daily and hourly bestows on us.

The order for releasing Lazarus from his burial-clothes, in view of the spectators of the miracle, was probably intended to shew them, that his restoration was not merely for the moment, but shew forth the mighty power of God, that he was to be restored to health and society, and return to all the duties of life, as if he had not died.

"45. Then many of the Jews came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."

"46. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."

"47. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles."

"48. If we let him thus alone, he will believe on him; and the

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“ shall come and take away both our place
“ and nation.”

One would have scarcely conceived it possible that any one who had been present at the scene just described, could have continued in a state of infidelity ; yet, we learn that, though many of the company then present believed, there were others who went to inform the Pharisees of what had passed, and to concert measures against Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees clearly saw that it was no longer possible to deny or conceal the wonderful works wrought by our Lord, and that, if they did not find some means of destroying him, their own power and influence would be at an end ; as all people would, of course, quit them, for one whose acts afforded such unanswerable proofs of his divine commission : thus they suffered pride and self-interest to regulate their conduct, in opposition to their own acknowledged conviction. In the loss of their own power, they imagined they saw the total
destruction

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shall come and take away both
and nation."

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saw that it was no longer
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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

destruction of their kingdom and
and, as is generally the case with
and ignorance, they drew down
themselves the very mischiefs which
their crooked and detestable policy
meant to avert; since the death
Lord, procured by their diabolic
travances, was the signal for the destruction
both of their Temple and of Jerusalem
itself, according to the prophecy
Saviour, (St. Luke, chapter xix
41. 42. 43. 44.) who wept over
city: "Saying, If thou hadst
"even thou, at least in this thy day,
"things which belong unto thy
"but now they are hid from thy
"For the days shall come upon thee
"thine enemies shall cast a trench
"thee, and compass thee round, and
"thee in on every side, and shall
"even with the ground, and they
"within thee; and they shall not
"in thee one stone upon another;
"thou knewest not the time of
"thy destruction." And, again, (in St. Matthew,

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chap. xxiii. ver. 37. 38.) where, with that compassion and kindness which so eminently distinguished his conduct, even towards those who reviled, insulted, and persecuted him to the death, he addresses himself to Jerusalem, after charging upon her all the righteous blood which had been spilt from the time of Abel to his own time, in the following most pathetic words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou
" that killest the prophets, and stonest
" them which are sent unto thee; how
" often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth
" her chickens under her wings, and ye
" would not! Behold, your house is left
" unto you desolate."

Many of those who were concerned in the crucifixion of our Saviour, lived to see his predictions verified in the destruction of the Temple and city of Jerusalem, under Titus, and the total dispersion of their nation. Their posterity have continued wanderers over the face of the earth to the present time; and though possessed
of

chap. xxiii. ver. 37. 38.) where, with
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 nently distinguished his conduct
 towards those who reviled, and
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 present time; and though posterity

of enormous wealth, have nev-
 to gain a regular establishment
 many attempts have been made
 purpose: they seem to be
 mankind, by Providence, as
 and perpetual warning again
 tuous and crying offences: w
 other manner account for the
 ing, long ago, acquired the
 power and influence which ge
 generally brings with it, inste
 the object of scorn and repr
 nations of the earth.

I cannot conclude this part
 better, than in the words of a
 and ingenious friend of mine
 which she has lately given to
 "The terrible exclamation
 "(St. Matthew, chap. xxvii. v
 "blood be on us, and on our
 "was fulfilled in a manner
 "remarkable, that it remai
 "veritable to all times and
 "The prophecies of our Lo
 "ing the destruction of Jer

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“ strictly and literally fulfilled ; inasmuch,
“ that one stone was not left upon ano-
“ ther. The miseries of the Jews, during
“ the siege of Jerusalem, were such as
“ strike every reader with horror and
“ with awe. The dispersion of the Jews
“ became a standing miracle, and proof
“ of the truth of the Christian religion,
“ to every one who is willing to be con-
“ vinced of it,”—*Clara Reeve.*

“ 49. And one of them, named Caiaphas,
“ being the high priest that same year, said
“ unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

“ 50. Nor consider that it is expedient
“ for us, that one man should die for the
“ people, and that the whole nation perish
“ not.

“ 51. And this spake he not of himself:
“ but, being high priest that year, he pro-
“ phesied that Jesus should die for that
“ nation ;

“ 52. And not for that nation only, but
“ that also he should gather together in
“ one

" strictly and literally fulfilled;
 " that one stone was not left
 " ther. The miseries of the
 " the siege of Jerusalem, which
 " strike every reader with
 " with awe. The disfigurement
 " became a standing miracle
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" 49. And one of them, namely
 " being the high priest that
 " unto them, Ye know nothing
 " 50. Nor consider that it is
 " for us, that one man should die
 " people, and that the whole nation
 " not.

" 51. And this spake he not of
 " but, being high priest that year,
 " phesied that Jesus should die
 " nation;

" 52. And not for that nation
 " at also he should gather together

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

" one the children of God that
 " tered abroad.

" 53. Then, from that day
 " took counsel together for to
 " death."

The office of high priest, by
 law, was confined to the elder
 house of Aaron, and, except the
 conduct, was to continue it
 when the Jews became subject
 man yoke, this regulation was
 and a very different mode where
 all offices of importance were
 sold, and the sacred one of
 amongst the rest: neither the
 fore, respecting the family of
 even the moral character of
 was attended to, in the choi
 priest. Caiaphas was a striking
 the latter: he did not pretend
 it was lawful, but only that it
 dient to take away the life of
 sake of the many; taking care
 out Christ Jesus as the victim

not the cry of innocent blood, though such severe vengeance was denounced by their law against the shedding of it : he, like many other wicked and detestable politicians, would sacrifice every sentiment of honor, religion, and virtue, rather than risk their power and influence. There seems to have been some peculiar virtue attached to the office of high priest, independent of the character who possessed it. It can never be supposed that Caiaphas was indulged by Providence with any particular mark of its favor ; yet he prophesied the truth respecting the death of Jesus Christ : his carnal mind does not seem to have comprehended the spiritual meaning of the prophecy : what he recommended was with a view to promote their temporal, rather than their eternal welfare. What God has ordained, he sometimes obliges the wicked to publish : we have many instances of this recorded in Scripture : one of a very striking nature may be found in the twenty-second chapter of Numbers ; where Balaam having been sent for to
curse

not the cry of innocent blood, such severe vengeance was done their law against the shedding: like many other wicked politicians, would sacrifice of honor, religion, and virtue, risk their power and influence, seems to have been some person attached to the office of high priest, independent of the character who can never be supposed to be indulged by Providence with a particular mark of its favor; yet the truth respecting the deceiver: his carnal mind does not comprehend the spiritual meaning of the prophecy: what he receives with a view to promote the law, rather than their eternal welfare. God has ordained, he founds the wicked to publish: we have seen of this recorded in Scripture: every striking nature may be found in the twenty-second chapter of Numbers. Balaam having been sent to

curse the Israelites, and, with the inclination to do so, was compelled by irresistible power, to bless them.

" 54. Jesus, therefore, walked openly among the Jews; but thence unto a country near to Bethanians, into a city called Ephraim, where he continued with his disciples.

" 55. And the Jews' passover was at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

" 56. Then sought they for Jesus and spake among themselves, as they walked in the Temple, What think ye, he will not come to the feast?

" 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he was, he should shew it, that they might take him."

The Jews, without hesitation, followed the opinion of Caiaphas: all the

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nies of their law, confirmed by their traditions, were in favor of it; and they seem to have disregarded the guilt or innocence of the person they meant to offer up as a sacrifice, and to have fixed upon our Lord as the object most obnoxious to them. Judging, therefore, from his known attention to all the duties of religion, that he would not be absent at this great festival, they took their measures for securing his person: nor were they deceived; for though it appears that he never exposed himself to unnecessary and useless danger, yet he never suffered any apprehension of it to prevent his performance of a positive duty. —

Christ was the true paschal Lamb; and all those which had been offered up from the first institution of the passover, were types of him: he chose, therefore, to offer up his life at that feast, and so to put an end to all those types and shadows of himself, in the institution of the Christian religion, teaching his followers to celebrate a much more glorious deliverance, than that which
the

nies of their law, confirmed by traditions, were in favor of it; and seem to have disregarded the innocence of the person that offer up as a sacrifice, and set upon our Lord as the obnoxious to them. Judging from his known attention to the of religion, that he would at this great festival, they were sure for securing his person they deceived; for though he never exposed himself to such and useless danger, yet he not by apprehension of it to prevent performance of a positive duty.

Christ was the true paschal Lamb, those which had been offered were the first institution of the paschal of him: he chose, therefore, his life at that feast, and so to present all those types and shadows of the institution of the Christian religion, his followers to celebrate the glorious deliverance, than that of

the Jews commemorated in the Passover from the Egyptian bondage. For this purpose, he instituted the Passover in the room of the passover, a remembrance of what he had done for us might be constantly before our minds. As it is not my intention fully into this subject at present, I reserve it for another place, I content myself with observing, that, if we would allow ourselves to meditate on this divine subject, they would be so interested in it, and so thoughtful of being acceptable to their blessed Lord and they would not suffer it, as frequently the case, to be thinking of other things; they would take care to be always provided with a wedding-garment, and of making their want of preparation for absenting themselves.

May we, by constant attendance on God in all holy and religious duties, receive such fresh supplies of grace as to enable us to serve, honor, and

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with the utmost humility and gratitude, acknowledging that we are unworthy of all his mercies, both temporal and spiritual, but in and through the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer; and whenever it may please God to afflict us, whether by the loss of health, fortune, friends, or by any other calamity, may we submit with that true resignation which becomes our Christian profession—with that true faith in holy Scripture by which we are taught that they are sent for our good, to prepare and fit us for a glorious immortality; being content to wait with the utmost resignation till the day of retribution for an explanation of God's dispensations; which, though at present above our limited comprehension, are, we may be assured, both wise and merciful. And that the rest of the world who have not been blessed with the pure light of the Gospel, may act up to the best of their knowledge, God, of his infinite mercy, grant, that so we may be all admitted into the mansions of bliss, and all unite in one general choir,
in

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in praise, adoration, and thanksgiving to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the happiness conferred upon us, through the merits and sufferings of our only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XII.

“ 1. **T**HEN Jesus, six days before the
“ passover, came to Bethany, where
“ Lazarus was, which had been dead,
“ whom he raised from the dead.

“ 2. There they made him a supper;
“ and Martha served: but Lazarus was
“ one of them that sat at the table with
“ him.

“ 3. Then took Mary a pound of oint-
“ ment of spikenard, very costly, and
“ anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped
“ his feet with her hair; and the house
“ was filled with the odour of the oint-
“ ment.

“ 4. Then

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

ST. JOHN, CHAP. VI

THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethsaida, where Lazarus was, which had been whom he raised from the dead.

2. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus, one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

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"4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which betrayed him,

"5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

"6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was an thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

"7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone; against the day of my burying she hath kept this.

"8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

We are here furnished with an example of the humility, love, and affection of Mary to our blessed Lord, and disregard to expence, while it was to him respect, or do him honor. He thought Judas: the reigning passion in his heart was avarice; a vice which corrupts every mind where it is admitted, and dries up the source of every virtue.

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could not see this waste, as he termed it, without indignation; and, under the cloak of charity, condemned the conduct of Mary for extravagance; when his only regret, in fact, was, that he was prevented from appropriating a part of it to his own use; as he would have done, had the value of it been deposited in the poor's purse, of which he had the charge. The opportunities which this trust gave him of enriching himself at the expence of the poor, must have been his only inducement for following a master whose kingdom was not of this world, and who was even frequently destitute of a place where to lay his head. It seems strange, nay scarcely possible, that one who was in daily habits of intercourse with our Lord, and was a witness of his miracles; who saw him feed five thousand people with five loaves and two small fishes; open the eyes of the blind; give feet to the lame; cure all manner of diseases; and, above all, cause the dead to arise from their grave and return to human society, should doubt

out of his divine commission. Yet that Judas did not believe in our Saviour, but was only a nominal disciple, is evident from his conduct; for had he believed in him, he could never have strayed so wide from his precepts.

This may serve to shew us the danger of encouraging evil habits: which, like noxious weeds, choak the good seed and render our minds unfit for the reception of the truth. It may also point out to us how weak and impotent is human reason, when unassisted by the divine grace. Judas had rendered himself unworthy of the blessing: he never solicited the divine grace; and therefore never felt it. When we reflect on the fatal consequences which followed, how careful ought we to be not to resist the holy spirit of God in our hearts, lest we also become castaways!

Our Saviour reproves Judas, and defends the conduct of Mary: not that he was an encourager of extravagance; which, not equally bad with avarice, is still a vice, as it deprives us of the power of

Ggg 2 assisting

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assisting our distressed brethren, by squandering a property we hold in charge for them ; but because Mary was actuated by a religious principle, and anointed him with this precious ointment preparatory to his burial, which she seems to have known to be at hand. They might always have the opportunity of exercising the virtue of charity : objects of it were never wanting ; but an opportunity of shewing personal respect and honor to the Son of God, they were not much longer to enjoy.

“ 9. Much people of the Jews, therefore, knew that he was there ; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

“ 10. But the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death ;

“ 11. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.”

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THE LIFE AND DEATH

ing our distressed brethren
 a property we hold in
 ; but because Mary was
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But the chief priests con
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 f the Jews went away, and
 Jesus."

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

The fame of the miracle he ha
 cently performed, and which, fr
 vicinity of Bethany to Jerusale
 have been universally known in th
 would naturally excite an eager c
 to see not only the person who h
 formed it, but also him who ha
 raised from the dead. Great mu
 of course, flocked to Bethany, as
 they knew that Jesus was there w
 zarus. The chief priests, who d
 came more alarmed for their influ
 the people, which they were sens
 already much diminished, now c
 by what means they might involve
 in the destruction they were me
 for Jesus ; knowing that, whilst t
 fered him to live, so striking a p
 the divine power of our Lord mu
 farily draw great numbers of t
 after him : could they once rema
 standing miracle, they were in ho
 might be able to give the whol
 action another turn, if not deny

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gether; or, at any rate, that time would soon destroy the remembrance of it.

“ 12. On the next day, much people
“ that were come to the feast, when they
“ heard that Jesus was coming to Jeru-
“ salem,

“ 13. Took branches of palm-trees, and
“ went forth to meet him, and cried, Ho-
“ fanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that
“ cometh in the name of the Lord.

“ 14. And Jesus, when he had found a
“ young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

“ 15. Fear not, daughter of Sion; be-
“ hold, thy King cometh, sitting on an
“ ass's colt.

“ 16. These things understood not his
“ disciples at the first: but when Jesus was
“ glorified, then remembered they that
“ these things were written of him, and
“ that they had done these things unto
“ him.

“ 17. The people, therefore, that was
“ with him when he called Lazarus out of
“ his

ave, and raised him from the dead, record.

For this cause the people also
him, for that they heard that he
one this miracle.

The Pharisees, therefore, said
g themselves; Perceive ye how ye
il nothing? behold the world is
after him."

going out of the multitude to
him, and their bringing him into
m with songs of triumph, was in
nity to the prophecy of Zechariah,
ix. ver. 9.) : " Rejoice greatly,
ughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter
rusalem : behold, thy King com-
nto thee : he is just, and having
ion ; lowly, and riding upon an
ad upon a colt the foal of an ass."
gain, (Psalm cxviii. verse 26.) :
d be he that cometh in the name
: Lord."

conduct of the people, upon this
n, might not perhaps have arisen
from

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from their faith in him as the *messiah*, but merely from gratitude for the many miracles he had wrought in their favor: indeed, the disciples themselves appear not to have, at this time, understood it in any other light. If so, they ignorantly fulfilled a very important prophecy. The Pharisees, however, regarded the affair in the most serious point of view: in his popularity they saw their own downfall; and were, therefore, confirmed in their purpose to destroy him.

Fear is the natural and constant attendant upon guilt. Conscious that they had corrupted the law of Moses, and that they had introduced the greatest abuses into it, for the mere purpose of their own aggrandizement, they trembled at the punishment that awaited them. Had they been faithful to the commandments of God, and worshipped him in spirit and truth, with no other object in view than his honor, would they have apprehended the entire overthrow of their religion and law by one who possessed no temporal power; whose

se followers were, in general, from
ngst the lowest ranks of the people,
whom they themselves professed to
ife? Had they been Moses' true dis-
s, they would have been Christ's also;
the appearance of our blessed Lord
a earth, would have caused a gene-
oy amongst them, in the stead of that
d which was so visible in all their
ms.

ad there been really any cause for
ehending a revolution of government,
we suppose that the Romans, who
ed so much jealousy upon all other
sions, would have remained quiet
tators whilst their authority was over-
ed? yet we find, that, even to the last,
Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, had
the least idea of any such danger.

20. And there were certain Greeks
nong them that came up to worship
the feast :

21. The same came, therefore, to
ilip, which was of Bethsaida of Ga-

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“ lilee,

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“ lilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we
“ would see Jesus.

“ 22. Philip cometh and telleth An-
“ drew : and again Andrew and Philip
“ tell Jesus.

“ 23. And Jesus answered them, say-
“ ing, The hour is come, that the Son of
“ man should be glorified.

“ 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you,
“ Except a corn of wheat fall into the
“ ground, and die, it abideth alone : but
“ if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

“ 25. He that loveth his life shall lose
“ it ; and he that hateth his life in this
“ world shall keep it unto life eternal.

“ 26. If any man serve me, let him fol-
“ low me ; and where I am, there shall
“ also my servant be : if any man serve
“ me, him will my Father honour.”

These Greeks are supposed by some to
have been dispersed Jews ; but by others,
with more probability, Gentiles, who, by
conversing with the Jews, had learned the
worship of the true God ; and though that
knowledge

knowledge would teach them that God is every where, and that he must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, yet they might find strong reasons to induce them to go to Jerusalem : we may find one in Exodus, (chap. xx. ver. 24.) where the Lord promiseth, " In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, " and I will bless thee." Another might be, that, by going to worship at Jerusalem, they made the most public acknowledgement of their faith, and manifested their reverence in him to all the world.— Strangers frequently came from different parts of the world, upon the same errand. In the eighth chapter of The Acts of the Apostles, we have an account of an eunuch of great authority and consequence, who came from Ethiopia to worship at Jerusalem : neither the distance nor fatigue of so great a journey could affright him from his duty : we may see by perusing the account, how greatly his pious zeal was rewarded, by admission into the Christian faith. From the earnest and eager

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desire

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desire he shewed immediately to embrace Christianity, we have every reason to suppose that he was one of its earliest and brightest ornaments in his own country. There can be no doubt but he endeavored to make himself perfectly acquainted with the new religion he had embraced: and the more it is known, the more lovely and desirable will it appear. Zephaniah prophesies of such journies, chap. iii. ver. 10. "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."

Neither Philip nor Andrew chose to introduce these Greeks to their master, until they had first acquainted him who they were that desired admittance: this adds strength to the supposition of their being Gentiles: Christ's death and resurrection were to be glorified by the Gentile world as well as by the Jews.

Nothing can be more apt or impressive than the simile our Lord here makes use of, to shew the benefit to be derived to mankind by his death. A 'corn of wheat' produceth

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produceth no fruit, except it
 it die, produces abundantly: so
 of Christ was necessary to
 wrath of God against sinners,
 store them to the capacity of
 that state of happiness original
 for them by their gracious Creator
 to the capacity; because it re-
 pend upon themselves whether
 benefit by the proffered grace
 told, in the following verses, I
 ferreth the goods of this life
 mortal happiness, will surely
 claim to the latter; whilst I
 spise them, nay, even life
 set in competition with his
 fare, will ensure to himself the
 reward. Our Lord has assured
 if we endeavor to the utmost
 to follow the example he has
 the best amongst us must follow
 the short of the bright original),
 honored of the Father, and of
 in our Saviour's kingdom.

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“ 27. Now is my soul troubled; and
“ what shall I say? Father, save me from
“ this hour: but for this cause came I
“ unto this hour.

“ 28. Father, glorify thy name. Then
“ came there a voice from Heaven, saying,
“ I have both glorified it, and will glorify
“ it again.

“ 29. The people, therefore, that stood
“ by, and heard it, said, that it thun-
“ dered: others said, An angel spake to
“ him.

“ 30. Jesus answered and said, This
“ voice came not because of me, but for
“ your sakes.”

Our Saviour was ‘troubled’ when the time drew near that he, in our nature and stead, was to suffer for the sins of the whole world; for though he willingly offered himself as our atonement, yet, having all the infirmities of our nature, (sin, only, excepted) the sufferings that awaited him in that nature must have been a burden which no less a person than the Son of
of

"27. Now is my soul troubled:
 "what shall I say? Father, leave
 "this hour: but for this hour
 "unto this hour.

"28. Father, glorify thine Son:
 "came there a voice from Heaven,
 "I have both glorified him, and will
 "glorify him again.

"29. The people, therefore, stood
 "by, and heard it, said, This
 "is the voice of the Son of
 "God: others said, An angel
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 in that nature must have been
 which no less a person than the

of God could have sustained. The
 sublime and incomprehensible this
 is to our confined understanding
 stronger does it point out to us the
 vicious nature of sin, which requires
 an atonement.

That no one but the Lamb
 could be found, either in Heaven
 or earth, to redeem mankind, we may
 learn from St. John's Revelation, (chap.
 9. 12. 13.): "And they sung a new
 "song, saying, Thou art worthy to
 "take the book, and to open the seals
 "thereof: thou wast slain, and hast
 "redeemed us from every nation,
 "God by thy blood out of every
 "mouth, and tongue, and people, and
 "tribe, and nation, and kind.
 "Also: "Saying, with a loud voice,
 "Blessing, and honour, and glory,
 "and power, be unto him that
 "sitteth upon the throne, for ever
 "and ever. And every creature
 "that was, and is, and shall be,
 "in Heaven, and on the earth, and
 "under the earth, and such as are in
 "them, heard I saying, Blessing,
 "and honour, and glory, and
 "power, be unto him that sitteth
 "upon the throne, for ever and
 "ever."

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“pówer, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.” Amen, Amen.

The knowledge which our blessed Saviour had, that, notwithstanding all his sufferings, there would still be very many who, through their own folly and wickedness, would counteract his gracious intentions, and so forfeit the blessings he was about to die to procure them, may reasonably be supposed to have contributed to the depression of spirits which he now felt.

Should he pray to the Father to spare him, how would the divine justice be satisfied? and what would become of lost mankind, whose deliverance he came into the world to procure? He therefore addresses himself to the Father, praying that he would glorify his name.

This was immediately answered by a voice from Heaven, that the people present might witness that his prayers were both heard and accepted. To Christ himself, this was totally unnecessary; he being
one

“power, be unto him that sits
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“and ever.” Amen, Amen

The knowledge which *Christ* had, that, notwithstanding his sufferings, there would still be some who, through their own infirmities, would counteract his intentions, and so forfeit the benefit he was about to die to procure, can reasonably be supposed to have contributed to the depression of spirit he now felt.

Should he pray to the Father for him, how would the divine Father be glorified? and what would become of mankind, whose deliverance he had come into the world to procure? He therefore addresses himself to the Father, saying that he would glorify his name.

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one with the Father. God's Son glorified by angels at his birth, was also to be glorified again at his resurrection, and ascension. —

The voice of God was so loud, that mere unassisted human nature could not hear it, without the greatest distress. The Israelites had, formerly, petitioned that the will of God might be announced through his servant Moses, and that the immediate voice of God should be so great, that they conceived it would be to hear his voice and live. Upon the present occasion, some of the people said it ‘thundered.’ If the voice of God with it such a holy and religious name, his name ought to be equally reverenced; he has expressly commanded us not to take it in vain; yet how many are there of us who would shudder at the thought of impiety or profaneness, yet lightly and carelessly make use of the name of God in their common conversation, thus taking in vain a name which

never be pronounced without reverence? But what can they say in excuse, who accustom themselves to profane swearing? this, of all other vices, appears to be the most absurd; because to this, contrary to all others, there cannot be the least temptation. Our great adversary, in most of his other attacks upon our virtue, baits his hook with something which we fancy, whilst the delusion of passion lasts, will add to our happiness; but, in this instance, he offers us none of his allurements, to draw us from our duty; and we must, therefore, engage in it, if we do at all, voluntarily. We could not well conceive that any person, possessed of common sense, although he might have given into this practice inconsiderately and through the influence of bad example, could continue in it a moment after its folly and absurdity had been pointed out, if we did not see so many examples amongst us of those who must have had opportunities of knowing better.

“ 31. Now

never be pronounced without. But what can they say in our custom themselves to prefer this, of all other vices, as the most absurd; because to it all others, there cannot be a relation. Our great advantage in his other attacks upon our hearts, is that he has put in his hook with something which adds to our happiness; but in this he offers us none of his usual bait to draw us from our duty; we are therefore, engaged in it, if we choose, voluntarily. We could never receive that any person, possessed of common sense, although he might be brought into this practice in confidence through the influence of bad company, could continue in it a moment. The folly and absurdity had been plain to us, we did not see so many opportunities of knowing better.

"31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

"32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

"33. (This he said, signifying that the hour of his death he should die.)

"34. The people answered him, saying, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?"

By the 'prince of this world' understood, the devil; who, from the time of the fall, had exercised greatness therein, and kept the minds of men overspread with ignorance and darkness, so far had the stupidity of men been carried, that altars had been erected to him, under various names, in different parts of the world, and the worship which ought to have been paid to God, had been transferred to the devil. The power had suffered a diminution.

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the first appearance of our Lord, and was now about to be entirely overturned by his death.

Christ, in the thirty-second verse, foretels his death, and the manner of it: that he should 'be lifted up;' that is, to the cross; and should 'draw all men' unto him. This has been already, in a great measure, fulfilled; and will, no doubt, be completely so, before the end of all things. The cross, till then the object of contempt and abhorrence, as the means of putting to death the worst of malefactors, has become sanctified; is thought of with reverence, by all Christians; and has even been thro' mistaken zeal and enthusiasm, exalted into an object of religious worship; whilst great part of the world have been drawn to a crucified Saviour, and to place their whole hopes of happiness upon his merits.

This lowest state of humiliation, to which he submitted in atonement to the offended majesty of his Father, was so perfect an act of obedience to God, that it
was

was immediately succeeded by the highest state of exaltation ; and every knee, in Heaven and on earth, was commanded to bend, at the mention of his sacred name.

That the people understood him in the sense here given, is plain, by their answer ; in which they allude to the different prophecies in Scripture, touching the messiah's kingdom and its duration.

Thus, in Daniel, (chap. vii. ver. 13. 14.)
 “ I saw in the night visions, and, behold,
 “ one like the Son of man came with the
 “ clouds of heaven, and came to the
 “ Antient of days, and they brought him
 “ near before him. And there was given
 “ him dominion, and glory, and a king-
 “ dom, that all people, nations, and lan-
 “ guages, should serve him : his dominion
 “ is an everlasting dominion, which shall
 “ not pass away, and his kingdom that
 “ which shall not be destroyed.” And
 again, (in Psalm cx. ver. 4.) “ The Lord
 “ hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou
 “ art a priest for ever after the order of
 “ Melchizedek.”

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The Jews, who, as I have before had frequent occasion to observe, understood all these prophecies as relating to a temporal kingdom, could not conceive how they were to be reconciled with our Lord's declaration, that he was to suffer death.

How strangely inconsistent was their expectation of an everlasting kingdom in a temporal world !

“ 35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you ; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you : for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth.

“ 36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

Our Lord here calls upon all who were present, to take advantage of the favorable opportunity now offered them, lest, if they should

The Jews, who, as I have had frequent occasion to observe, regard all these prophecies as relating to a temporal kingdom, could not but be surprised when they were to be reconciled to the declaration, that he was to die.

How strangely inconsistent was the expectation of an everlasting kingdom in a temporal world!

"35. Then Jesus said unto the Jews, *little while is the light with you: while ye have the light, let not it come upon you: for he that is in darkness, knoweth not what he doeth.*

"36. *While ye have light, believe the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and did hide himself from them.*"

Lord here calls upon all who are to take advantage of the favour of mercy now offered them, lest they

should neglect it, it might not be afforded them. The light of the gospel of Christ is as necessary for the soul, as the light of the sun for the bodies is; to prevent us from falling into every kind of danger. Jesus (his hour not being come, though approaching,) withdrew himself from the malice of his persecutors: by which we may learn that we are not required to expose ourselves to unnecessary perils.

"37. But though he had done many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

"38. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, *who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

"39. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said

"40. *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand,*

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“ with their heart, and be converted, and
“ I should heal them.

“ 41. These things said Esaias, when he
“ saw his glory, and spake of him.

“ 42. Nevertheless, among the chief
“ rulers also many believed on him ; but
“ because of the Pharisees they did not
“ confess him, lest they should be put out
“ of the Synagogue :

“ 43. For they loved the praise of
“ men more than the praise of God.”

Although God is merciful and long-suffering, slow to anger, and of great goodness, yet if we obstinately persist in resisting the influence of his holy spirit, and will not be brought to repentance, God's spirit, as it is elsewhere expressed in Scripture, will not always strive with us. This was the case with many of the Jews ; and this I understand to be the meaning of the prophet Esaias in the above passage, and of all the similar passages we meet with in holy Scripture ; such as, that “ God “ hardened the heart of Pharaoh,” &c. ;
that

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that is, when we will exert no
power of our own against our wicked
propensities, have no ground to expect the
interposition of God. Such a state is, of
itself, the most dreadful: then, indeed,
the heart is hardened, and the eyes blinded
to every thing that is good.

Christ's repeated miracles did,
indeed, produce their effect, even among
the chief rulers; for we are told, that many
chief rulers believed on him, yet they
suffered temporal considerations to
prevent their making public profession
of their faith.

A desire to obtain the praise
of men, low-creatures, when confined within
proper bounds, is not only allowable,
but laudable, and becomes an incentive
to virtue: but it is a vice, of a mean
and vicious nature, when sought by
unlawful means, or in preference to our
duty.

It is our duty to be extremely
careful of our outward actions and
speeches, considering the effect which
they have upon others: example,

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known, always produces more effect, than precept. St. Matthew, (chap. v. ver. 16.) points out to us, what our conduct ought to be, as well as the motive of it : “ Let
“ your light so shine before men, that they
“ may see your good works, and glorify
“ your Father which is in Heaven.”

“ 44. Jesus cried, and said, He that
“ believeth ~~on~~ me, believeth not on me,
“ but on him that sent me.

“ 45. And he that seeth me, seeth him
“ that sent me.

“ 46. I am come a light into the world,
“ that whosoever believeth on me should
“ not abide in darkness.

“ 47. And if any man hear my words,
“ and believe not, I judge him not : for I
“ came not to judge the world but to save
“ the world.

“ 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiv-
“ eth not my words, hath one that judgeth
“ him : the word that I have spoken, the
“ same shall judge him in the last day.

“ 49. For I have not spoken of myself ;
“ but

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49. For I have not spoken of

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" but the Father which sent me, I
 " a commandment what I should
 " what I should speak.

" 50. And I know that his com-
 " ment is life everlasting : what
 " speak, therefore, even as the Father
 " unto me, so I speak."

Our Lord, in the above passage
 and expressly declares his unity
 Father. There were many who
 him as a great prophet, and a
 perfect of human beings ; but
 extended no further. Jesus, I
 complains of the slowness of
 only of the multitude, but even
 disciples ; who, during his life-
 frequently to have wavered in
 For this reason, he repeats the
 tion upon many occasions, '
 Father are one ; ' ' He that ha-
 ' hath seen the Father ; ' and ma-

Christ came not at this time
 the world, but to teach mankind
 to everlasting happiness : where

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come a second time, it will be to judge them by those laws which he left for their guidance, at his first coming. God will vindicate the honor of his Son, and judge all those unworthy of his favor and protection, who shall dare to treat him with dishonor. Our Lord warns the Jews how they rejected him; as, in so doing, they rejected the Father also, whom they acknowledged to be their God.

Grant to us, most gracious Lord God, so to believe in the gospel of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, that, through him, everlasting felicity may be our portion! To Him, therefore, with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end! Amen.

CHAPTER

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CHAPTER THE SEVEN

ST. JOHN, CHAP. 7

" 1. **N**OW, before the feast
 " over, when Jesus
 " hour was come, that he
 " out of this world unto the
 " ing loved his own which
 " world, he loved them unto

Our Lord's love for his fa-
 and disciples shewed itself
 as the time drew near when
 leave them, and when he knew
 would suffer at that sad and
 His friendship, being founded
 qualities of the heart, was st

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changeable : it was the friendship of virtue. This ennobles our nature, and constitutes one of the greatest comforts of life. How widely different from those compacts of vice, which so frequently usurp its sacred name.

“ 2. And supper being ended, (the
“ devil having now put into the heart of
“ Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray
“ him,)

“ 3. Jesus knowing that the Father had
“ given all things into his hands, and that
“ he was come from God, and went to
“ God ;

“ 4. He riseth from supper, and laid
“ aside his garments : and took a towel,
“ and girded himself.

“ 5. After that he poureth water into a
“ bason, and began to wash the disciples’
“ feet, and to wipe them with the towel
“ wherewith he was girded.”

How strong is the influence of habit, on
the human mind ; and how cautious ought
we

we to be of giving way to the first temptation! If we condescend to parley with our grand adversary, we give him an advantage over us which he would not fail to improve. Our best security against such an enemy, is immediate flight. Let us not flatter ourselves, that we can go so far and no farther: each step in vice smooths the way to the next; and, in a course of time, we commit, without remorse, crimes which we should at first have shrunk from with horror and detestation. When Judas began with pilfering from the poor's bag, he, probably, reconciled the theft to his own conscience, by placing it to the account of perquisites, or rewards, for his trouble in being the bearer of it; till, grown bolder by frequent crimes, and his appetite for pelf increasing by indulgence, he at length formed the detestable idea of betraying his Lord and Master, for a sum of money.

What a lesson of humility, and the mutual interchange of good offices, has our Lord here set us! The Son of God himself,

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himself, just before his return to Heaven, from whence he descended ; he to whom all power had been given ; and at whose name every creature in Heaven and earth was commanded to bow, condescended to take upon himself the form and office of a menial servant, and to wash the feet of his own disciples ! Can we, after such an example, think any office of kindness we can shew to a fellow-creature, a degradation ? This was a ceremony much in practice among the Jews ; who, upon the arrival of any guests at their house, ordered their servants to take water and wash their feet ; as we may read in various parts of the sacred history.

“ 6 Then cometh he to Simon-Peter :
“ and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost
“ thou wash my feet ?

“ 7. Jesus answered and said unto him,
“ What I do thou knowest not now ; but
“ thou shalt know hereafter.

“ 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt
“ never wash my feet. Jesus answered
“ him,

himself, just before his return from whence he descended; all power had been given: his name every creature in Heaven was commanded to bow, and take upon himself the form of a menial servant, and to wash his own disciples! Can we, for example, think any office of *adoration*? This was a ceremonial practice among the Jews: who ordered their servants to take wash their feet; as we may read in parts of the sacred history.

“ 6 Then cometh he to Simon, and Peter saith unto him, Lord, thou wash my feet?
 “ 7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; thou shalt know hereafter.
 “ 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered and said unto him, If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.
 “ 9. Simon-Peter saith unto him, not my feet only, but also my head.
 “ 10. Jesus saith to him, washed needeth not save to wash the head, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.
 “ 11. For he knew who should wash him; therefore said he, Ye are clean.”

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“ 11. For he knew who should wash him; therefore said he, Ye are clean.”

Surprize and astonishment, descension of their Lord, see kept all the disciples silent, and performed the humble office, to Peter; who, shocked that he should so degrade himself, excused all the impetuosity of his character, nothing should ever induce him to it. But when Jesus intimated that there was some mystery in the washing, which should be hereafter to him, and that without it he

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no part in him, he eagerly recals his declaration, and solicits to be washed all over.

On this impetuosity of temper in Peter, I must beg to be indulged with a few remarks. If such dispositions, as it has been often remarked, are capable of higher attainments in religion and virtue, they are likewise more subject to be surprized into the excesses of vice. Peter seems always to have acted from the impulse of the moment; and, consequently, to have fallen into many errors. It was the constant endeavor of our Lord, to check this warmth in him; and his fall seems to have been permitted, for the purpose of obliging him to put a greater restraint upon himself in future: and, we have reason to believe, that it completely answered that end, by correcting his passions, and bringing them within the bounds of reason and moderation.

Let us take warning; nor idly suppose, that violence of temper will justify us in any improprieties we may be guilty of: our reason was given us to restrain and keep our passions within due bounds.

To

no part in him, he eagerly re-
 ration, and solicits to be vain.

On this impetuosity of mind
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To the desire expressed by St
 our Lord replies, That enough has
 done, in washing the feet, to pu-
 whole body: plainly inferring,
 was a mystical washing and typ-
 purification of our souls from sin-
 ing washed in his blood, which
 about to shed for that purpose.

And, here, I cannot but observe
 this passage seems to furnish a fir-
 gument against that sect of Christ
 object to a similar washing, or typ-
 purification of the soul from sin
 church ceremony of baptism; a
 good effects could not be produce
 out a general washing; which I
 where insisted upon, and which
 declared by our Lord, in a cal-
 same nature, to be unnecessary
 when he declared the disciples cle-
 cepts him who was to betray him
 he was not deceived: the art ar-
 crisy of Judas might pass on and
 could not veil his purpose from
 seeing eye of God.

“ 12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them; Know ye what I have done to you?

“ 13. Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

“ 14. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

“ 15. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

“ 16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

“ 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

“ 18. I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but, that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

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The various acts of meekness and humility in our blessed Lord, cannot be too often adverted to; since pride is one of the greatest enemies to the peace and happiness of mankind. The instance now before us, scarcely requires a comment; he having himself condescended to explain it so fully: If (says he) I, whom ye all acknowledge as your Lord and Master, have stooped to wash your feet, will ye hesitate to shew equal humility towards each other? Will ye not sacrifice all pride and contention; and prove to the world, by the steady and affectionate regard which subsists amongst you, that you are my disciples indeed? Do not fancy yourselves degraded by acts which you have seen me perform: ye would not set yourselves up above your master: what, therefore, I have done, cannot be improper in you. Let this example which I have given you, be ever present to your minds; and, be assured, that, whilst you follow it, you will enjoy the blessing of a self-approving conscience,

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science, and ensure to yourselves the favor of your God.

That Christ Jesus is our Lord and Master, we are all ready to acknowledge; but what will this avail us, if our lives and conduct do not correspond with our professions? As well might we call him a true and faithful subject, who, being intrusted with his king's business, should hold secret correspondence with the enemy to betray him; and this merely because he acknowledged his authority. ✱

Ingratitude is a vice which is held in general abhorrence; and the more so, perhaps, because not punishable by any human law. But what should we think of a person, who, redeemed from a state of slavery; and restored to freedom by one from whom he had no claim, or even expectation of such a favor, and afterwards adopted as a son into the family of his benefactor, should, in return, offer mere lip-service, whilst his actions contradicted even this appearance of respect? Would
not

not such a character meet with universal contempt? Yet how infinitely short does this picture fall of the wonderful love and affection shewn to us by our blessed Lord! who, for our sakes, quitting the enjoyment of perfect happiness in the realms of immortality, submitted to the utmost humiliation and anguish of body and mind, during a painful life upon earth; and at last suffered the death of the cross, to save us from a much more shameful bondage; namely, that of sin and Satan. And what is the return which he requires of us? Merely, that we should so act as to secure to ourselves those invaluable blessings which he died to put within our reach. How stupid, as well as ungrateful, must we be, if we reject such easy terms of happiness!

Jesus well knew the apostacy of Judas; and that, as had been foretold by the prophet, the crime he was about to commit would be exaggerated by its being the very man who eat bread at his own table who should betray him.

✓ The duties of hospitality have been held sacred, even amongst the most uncivilized nations ; and a breach of them considered as an act of treachery. Under *this head*, I cannot but consider a practice, which, though generally reprobated, is, I fear, too common : I mean that of taking advantage of the freedom which generally prevails at table ; by repeating what may pass, to the injury perhaps of those present : and this is rendered still more disgusting, when turned against the entertainer himself. Against this practice, I cannot too strongly warn my readers, as being equally ungenerous and dangerous.

“ 19. Now I tell you before it come,
 “ that, when it is come to pass, ye may
 “ believe that I am he.

“ 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He
 “ that receiveth whomsoever I send, re-
 “ ceiveth me ; and he that receiveth me,
 “ receiveth him that sent me.”

That

The duties of hospitality are sacred, even amongst the most barbarous nations; and a breach of them is as an act of treachery. I cannot but consider a person though generally reprobate, as common: I mean that of the usage of the freedom which prevails at table; by repeating invitations, to the injury perhaps of the guest: and this is rendered still more disgusting, when turned against the entertainer himself. Against this practice I cannot too strongly warn you, as being equally ungenerous and dangerous.

“ 19. Now I tell you before that, when it is come to pass, believe that I am he.

“ 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.”

That one from amongst their number, one of the chosen twelve, should be a betrayer of the Lord, must have been a circumstance so unthought of, and so incredible to the other apostles, that one might well make the knowledge of his own truth: since no man but God than omniscience could have discovered.

Our Lord seems, in the last chapter, to allude to the holy spirit which he sent after he quitted them; declaring that no person can receive or acknowledge the Son without the Father, or the Father without the Holy Ghost. The belief in one must, necessarily, be a belief in all three. This promise was to be universal; not confined to any one rank, or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, but to be bestowed liberally on all who should be baptized into the faith, as says the prophet Joel, (chap. 29.): “ And it shall come to pass, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, you shall see visions, and dream dreams.”

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“ shall dream dreams, your young men
“ shall see visions : and also upon the ser-
“ vants and upon the handmaids in those
“ days will I pour out my spirit.” *Jere-*
miah also prophesies to the same effect,
(chap. xxxi. ver. 34.) : “ And they shall
“ teach no more every man his neighbour,
“ and every man his brother, saying,
“ Know the Lord : for they shall all know
“ me, from the least of them unto the
“ greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I
“ will forgive their iniquity, and I will re-
“ member their sin no more.”

These two prophecies clearly point out to what a degree the Christian world should be enlightened.

How great is the delight of those whose minds are anxious for true wisdom, to have it in their power, by the assistance of God's holy spirit (which always attends such as are desirous of entertaining the heavenly guest) to trace the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament, to their completion in the new ! This is one of the rewards (and a most satisfactory one it is)
of

of those who seriously and attentively study the holy Scriptures.

“ 21. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

“ 22. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

“ 23. Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

“ 24. Simon-Peter, therefore, beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

“ 25. He then lying on Jesus’ breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

“ 26. Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.”

Our Lord, with that tenderness and compassion which so eminently distinguish-

ed every act of his life, even towards his bitterest enemies, could not reflect on the base ingratitude of Judas, and the fatal consequences he would inevitably draw on himself by so foul a crime, without being 'troubled : ' although his pure mind abhorred the guilt, he could not help feeling for the traitor ; particularly when he saw him in one with whom he had long lived in habits of social intercourse.

The disciples, on our Lord's declaration That one of them should betray him, were thrown into the greatest consternation, as well as astonishment : they looked on each other with suspicion and dismay ; but knew not on whom to fix : trembling and disheartened, each of them feared, though unconscious himself of so detestable a design, the all-searching eye of their Lord might have discovered the yet-unformed intent lurking in his heart. The suspense was too painful to be long borne ; and Peter, who seems to have acquired more diffidence of himself, since his last discourse with Jesus concerning the
washing

ed every act of his life, even his bitterest enemies, could not but see the base ingratitude of Judas, and the consequences he would bring on himself by so foul an act. Being 'troubled': although he abhorred the guilt, he could not but see the consequences of his act, and was living in habits of social intercourse with him in one with whom he

The disciples, on our Lord's part, saw that one of them should be thrown into the great tribulation, as well as astonishment, as they looked on each other with fear and dismay; but knew not on whom it would fall. Trembling and disheartened, and fearing, though unconscious of the detestable design, the all-seeing eye of their Lord might have discerned the yet-unformed intent lurking in the hearts of the disciples. The suspense was too painful for them; and Peter, who seems to have been more diffident of himself, in his last discourse with Jesus concerning

washing his feet, instead of being the first to speak, applies to the disciple to make the inquiry. He is graciously condescending to the anxious minds, points out the way in such a way, that he himself has been certain he was disc-

"27. And after the sop St. John said into him. Then said Jesus to him, That thou doest, do quickly."

"28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this."

"29. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that he should buy with it, or give to the poor. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out."

"30. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out."

Christ having given him the sop, we are told that 'Satan entered into him.' Judas, by his avarice, hypoc-

gratitude, had made himself a fit dwelling for such a guest : Satan was therefore suffered to take full possession of him ; and, no doubt, suggested every argument which his malice could furnish, to confirm him in his devilish purpose. His first attack, we may suppose to have been on the ruling passion of his heart ; pointing out to him, that, from Jesus, he could expect neither wealth nor honors ; whilst, with the chief priests and rulers, he might make his own terms, by putting into their power him whom they had so long attempted to take in vain, and pass the remainder of his life in ease and affluence. He might, then, urge him to resentment, for the preference which our Lord shewed to others of his disciples, (which was, no doubt, the case, from the knowledge he had of his character) ; and may be supposed to have closed the temptation, by urging that, in giving up Christ, he would do an acceptable service to the religion and laws of his country, which his master was endeavoring to subvert. To a mind so perverted as
that

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that of Judas, such arguments must
been unanswerable; and feeling conscious
that he was now discovered, and
longer to bear the divine looks
master he was about to betray, I
to have followed our Lord's advice
be expeditious in what he meant
by going out immediately and making
terms with the chief priests and
to deliver him up to them that were

Though the words which our
addressed to Judas were perfectly
gible to him, his conscience pointing
their meaning, they were not understood
by the rest of the apostles; who could
them to relate to some commission
had given him to execute. The
communication he had made to the betrayer
ciple, appears to have been private
immediately communicated to them.
The sum which he received, as
told by the other evangelists, was
ing to prophecy) thirty pieces of silver.
St. Matthew, (chap. xxvi. ver. 15.)
states it thus : " Then one of the

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“called Judas Iscariot, went unto the
“chief priests, and said unto them, What
“will ye give me, and I will deliver him
“unto you? And they covenanted with
“him for thirty pieces of silver.”

This appears to be, by the law of Moses, the fixed price for the life of a slave; as we may see in Exodus, chap. xxi. verse 32.: “If the ox shall push a man-servant
“or maid-servant; he shall give unto their
“master thirty shekels of silver, and the
“ox shall be stoned.” Thus we see that our blessed Lord not only suffered as a malefactor, but was also sold, at the price of a slave. There is another prophecy, in the eleventh chapter of Zechariah, (ver. 12. 13.): “And I said unto them, If ye think
“good, give me my price; and if not,
“forbear. So they weighed for my price
“thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord
“said unto me, Cast it unto the potter:
“a goodly price that I was prized at of
“them. And I took the thirty pieces of
“silver, and cast them to the potter in
“the house of the Lord.”

St.

St. Matthew (chap. xxvii. ver. 9.) adds :
 “ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken
 “ by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they
 “ took the thirty pieces of silver, the price
 “ of him that was valued, whom they of
 “ the children of Israel did value.”

That Judas Iscariot should demand no more of the chief priests for delivering up Christ to them, than the mere price of a slave's life, when there cannot be a doubt that, rather than have failed in their purpose, they would have gratified his avarice to its utmost extent, serves to place in the strongest possible point of view, the over-ruling hand of Providence ; which, for the completion of the prophecies, obliged Judas to confine his demand to so trifling a sum.

“ 31. Therefore, when he was gone out,
 “ Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glo-
 “ rified, and God is glorified in him.

“ 32. If God be glorified in him, God
 “ shall also glorify him in himself, and shall
 “ straitway glorify him.

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“ 33. Little

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“ 33. Little children, yet a little while
“ I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and
“ as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go
“ ye cannot come; so now I say unto
“ you.”

The Son of man was to be glorified, by suffering for, and redeeming, mankind; by arising from the dead, and ascending into Heaven. From the time, therefore, that Judas, conquering every remaining check of conscience, determined to deliver up his master to destruction, the act of mediation may be said to have been completed; and, consequently, that the Son of man was then ‘ glorified ;’ that, by this trying act of his obedience, God was also ‘ glorified in him ;’ and that God glorified him, by giving into his hands all power and dominion over that world which he had redeemed.

Our blessed Lord now, addressing his disciples by the endearing appellation of ‘ little children,’ endeavors, with all the tender care and solicitude of a fond father,

"33. Little children, yet I am with you. Ye shall see me as I said unto the Jews. But ye cannot come; so I am with you."

The Son of man was born suffering for, and redemption arising from the dead, and ascended to Heaven. From the time of Judas, conquering every sin of conscience, determined to be master to destruction, the Son may be said to have been glorified; and, consequently, the act of his obedience, God glorified in him; and that God glorified by giving into his hands dominion over that world is seemed.

Blessed Lord now, addressed by the endearing appellation, 'children,' endeavors, with love and solicitude of a father,

to prepare them for the loss of him shortly to sustain; and to comfort them by the afflicting consideration, that they cannot accompany him; as his bodily earth would be then accomplished only beginning. He might also, by this term; to point out to them much they stood in need of his support and assistance; without which they would be as unable to act for themselves; as an infant would be, dependent on its parents.

"34. A new commandment I give you; That ye love one another, as I have loved you; that ye also love one another."

"35. By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

The absolute state of dependence of human beings upon each other, that the Almighty, from the beginning intended that mutual love and

will should subsist among them. The Jews, in many parts of holy Scripture, are commanded to love one another. It is expressly enjoined them, in *Leviticus*, (chap. xix. ver. 18.): "Thou shalt not
 "avenge, nor bear any grudge against the
 "children of thy people, but thou shalt
 "love thy neighbour as thyself." Now although this was an ancient law, yet the love here enjoined by our Lord might truly be called 'a new commandment;' since both the extent and motive of it were different: the love and charity here recommended, was not to be confined to this or that particular country, or description of people; but to embrace the whole race of mankind, without distinction; as composing one great family, under God, their common Father.

It teaches us to be kind and affectionate to all our brethren; and ever ready to assist them in their wants and distresses, of whatever nature they may be: for our Lord tells us, in another place, That every act of kindness shewn to the least
 of

will should subsist among the Jews, in many parts of his law are commanded to love one another is expressly enjoined them (chap. xix. ver. 18.): "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against thy children of thy people; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; although this was an ancient law, love here enjoined by our Lord truly be called 'a new commandment,' since both the extent and manner were different: the love which was recommended, was not to that or that particular community of people; but to embrace the whole race of mankind, without distinction; as composing one great family, our God, their common Father. It teaches us to be kind and merciful to all our brethren; and ever to assist them in their wants and distresses; whatever nature they may be: it tells us, in another place, that the act of kindness shown to the

of his brethren, he shall consider as done to himself. But what exalts this commandment above whatever was enjoined to the world, and which is the great distinguishing mark of Christianity, is, that it extends even to our enemies: we are to bless them that curse us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. So sublime an idea could never have entered the conception of mere man, but could have proceeded from that glorious Being who sacrificed his own life to save his interest enemies from merited punishment.

Our motive to the performance of this duty, ought to be gratitude to our Saviour, for the inestimable favours conferred upon us, and to shew to the world that we are his disciples, in deed and truth, and not in name only. Christianity cannot fail to enlarge our mind, and root out all narrowness of heart, and that self-love which hardens us to the distresses of others; it produces in us a dispositive mind which qualifies us to become

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humble instruments, in the hands of the Almighty; of converting the house of mourning and repining — of want and wretchedness, into that of joy and gratitude—of plenty and comfort: a disposition which is not more a blessing to others, than to ourselves.

“ 36. Simon-Peter said unto him, Lord;
“ whither goest thou? Jesus answered
“ him, Whither I go thou canst not follow
“ me now; but thou shalt follow me
“ afterwards.

“ 37. Peter said unto him, Lord, why
“ cannot I follow thee now? I will lay
“ down my life for thy sake.

“ 38. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou
“ lay down thy life for my sake? Verily,
“ verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall
“ not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.”

Peter, who had heard with great uneasiness that his master was going away, and that they should not be permitted to follow him, now puts the question to him,

humble instruments, in the hands of Almighty, of converting mourning and repining—in wretchedness, into that of joy and plenty and consolation which is not more to others, than to ourselves.

“36. Simon-Peter said unto him, Whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

“37. Peter said unto him, Lord, cannot I follow thee now? Jesus answered him, Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

“38. Jesus answered him, Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Peter, who had heard with joy, that his master was going to the Father, that they should not be separated from him, now puts the question

him, Whither he was going? Our Saviour replies by the comfortable assurance, That, although he cannot accompany him then, he should follow him: nor is this promise confined to Peter and the rest of the apostles, but is extended to all his true and faithful disciples, from one generation to the end of the world. With cheerfulness and resignation ought we to submit, to whatever trials and sufferings his wisdom has appointed for us, in this life; when we are assured that, if we properly under them, we shall be admitted into his kingdom, and be partakers of everlasting happiness!

St. Peter, still mistaking our meaning, and supposing that he was to engage in some dangerous undertaking in which he did not wish to involve his disciples, with all the zeal of true friendship and affection, presses to be admitted to share his master's danger; assuring that he would willingly sacrifice himself in his service. We have every reason

suppose that Peter was sincere in this declaration, at the time he made it; and, there can be no doubt, that Jesus was pleased with such a proof of the warmth of his affection; but perceiving, probably, that Peter was too confident in his own strength, our Lord took the opportunity of checking his presumption, by telling him, that, firm as he then thought himself, within a very few hours, he should be guilty of the meanness of denying all knowledge of him.

The event, as we shall see hereafter, proved the truth of our Lord's prophecy, and the weakness and unsteadiness of human nature when left to itself.

Let this serve as a warning to us, to guard against every species of arrogance, or presumption, in relying on our own strength alone for the performance of our duty; let us, with true humility and meekness of heart, address ourselves to the throne of grace; that we may receive assistance from above, and be daily improved in charity and all other Christian virtues;

suppose that Peter was sincere in his declaration, at the time he said there can be no doubt, that he was pleased with such a proof of his affection; but perceive that Peter was too confident in his strength, our Lord took the opportunity of checking his presumption in him, that, firm as he then stood, within a very few hours, he was guilty of the meanness of his knowledge of him.

The event, as we shall see, proved the truth of our Lord's words, and the weakness and unsteadiness of man nature when left to itself.

Let this serve as a warning guard against every species of pride or presumption, in relying on our own strength alone for the performance of duty; let us, with true humility of heart, address ourselves to the throne of grace; that we may receive assistance from above, and be preserved in charity and all other

virtues; endeavoring, in our word and action, to follow of our blessed Lord. To wit, Father and the Holy Ghost, and glory, world without en

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER THE
SEVENTEENTH.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BEFORE I proceed to comment upon the fourteenth chapter of St. John, I must repeat a practice which I have frequently found it necessary to adopt, and for which I prepared my readers in an early part of this work—that of supplying, from the other evangelists, such information as is not to be found at all in this gospel; or which, if found, is not treated on so largely as the nature of the subject may seem to require. This is particularly the case with respect to the institution of the Lord's supper: a sacrament of such general and infinite importance to all Christians, that it well deserves their most serious consideration.

Should

Should it be asked how it happened that St. John should omit altogether, or only slightly touch on, subjects which the other evangelists thought of so much consequence? I answer, that the other three had, many years before, written complete histories of our blessed Saviour, from his birth to his ascension into Heaven; including all the remarkable occurrences of which they had been witnesses: these were well known in the world, it is totally unnecessary for St. John, after such a distance of time had elapsed, to repeat, in the same order, the same facts and circumstances which they had recorded.

It is evident, that St. John did not mean his Gospel to be considered as a complete history of Jesus Christ; but, rather, as a collection of proofs of his divinity. He himself expresses this, in the latter part of the twentieth chapter of this book:—
And many other signs truly did Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that

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“ Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and
“ that believing ye might have life through
“ his name.”

In the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew, and the twenty-sixth and some succeeding verses, we have the following account of the institution of this blessed sacrament. “ And as they were eating,
“ Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and
“ brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and
“ said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And
“ he took the cup, and gave thanks, and
“ gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of
“ it : for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the
“ remission of sins.” To which account St. Luke adds these words : “ This do, in
“ remembrance of me.”

It behoves us to consider well the following points : The Author of the institution ; the time of it ; the nature and purposes for which it was instituted ; and, lastly, the manner in which we should prepare ourselves to celebrate it, so as to derive from it all the benefits it offers to us.

I propose

propose to consider all these points in their order, and then to make some observations, and draw some conclusions from the whole.

And, first, as to the Author of this sacrifice. It was no less a person than the Son of God himself: who, in compassion to lost mankind (become by their own inexcusable folly and perverseness the objects of God's wrath), and to restore them to his favour by taking upon him the penalty of their guilt, had, voluntarily, quitted the glorious mansions of bliss; taken upon himself their nature, with all its imperfections and frailties, sin only excepted; submitted to pass thirty-three years on earth, in a state of abject poverty, and, during the three last of them, subjected to every species of insult and contempt which pride and arrogance of power and riches could impose upon him, and now at the point of experiencing the most unheard-of cruelties and tortures which malice and resentment of man could invent, and of closing the whole by a death

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death the most painful and ignominious—even the death of the cross.

Such was the divine Author; and the time was immediately previous to the completion of his sufferings; the very night before his crucifixion.

The purpose of the institution is declared, by Christ himself, to be that of perpetuating, through all ages, the remembrance of his wonderful love to mankind; and the gratitude and obedience which are his dues from them, in consequence.

It was to take place of the Passover; that having been established in remembrance of God's deliverance of the Jews, when he smote all the first-born of the land of Egypt, from the bondage of Pharaoh; and as a type, or shadow, of a much greater deliverance mankind were to experience in the voluntary sacrifice of Christ, the true paschal Lamb: this being therefore on the point of its accomplishment, the shadow was of course to be done away. The nature of it was perfectly simple;
but

death the most painful and even the death of the cross.

Such was the divine Anointed time was immediately previous to the completion of his sufferings; and before his crucifixion.

The purpose of the institution declared, by Christ himself, to be perpetuating, through all ages, the remembrance of his wonderful love to mankind; and the gratitude and obedience which are his dues from them, in consequence.

It was to take place of the Passover having been established in remembrance of God's deliverance of the Jews, to remove all the first-born of the Egyptians, from the bondage of Pharaoh, and as a type, or shadow, of a more perfect deliverance mankind were to expect in the voluntary sacrifice of Christ, the paschal Lamb: this being the point of its accomplishment, the shadow was of course to be done away, the nature of it was perfectly

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but fully expressive of the blessing to convey. The elements to be used were bread and wine: intimating they gave strength and vigor to carnal bodies, so when received, through as the body and blood of Christ, they would, in like manner, be spiritual food to our souls, and the basis of every Christian virtue.

We come now to consider the manner in which we should prepare ourselves for the worthy receiving of it.

It must be evident to every one who reflects on the atonement made by God for the guilt of mankind, that justice could be satisfied with no other offering than the death of his only Son: how great must be his hatred against sin, and how incumbent it is upon us to remove from our hearts what cost our dear.

It will therefore be necessary, in the first place, to examine into the state of our soul, that we may see and know the situation of it actually is.

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not expect perfection from us ; but has been graciously pleased to promise his acceptance of our sincere and hearty endeavors to please him, and of repentance and determination of amendment, when we have done amiss. Our Church catechism points out to us the several heads on which we ought to examine ourselves; namely :

Whether we repent us truly of our former sins ?

Whether we steadfastly purpose to lead a new life ?

Whether we have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ ?

Whether we have a thankful remembrance of his death ? And,

Whether we be in charity with all men ?

Having fully and impartially examined ourselves, on all these points ; solicited the grace of God's holy spirit, to assist our honest endeavors ; and formed our resolution for the time to come ; let us not scruple to present ourselves at God's holy table,

le, in full confidence that we shall receive all the benefits purchased for us by the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ.

It is extremely natural to suppose that, even if our blessed Lord had not himself ordained this holy sacrament and endowed with such efficacy, the gratitude of mankind would have established something of a similar nature, in remembrance of so paralleled an instance of love shewn them, and that they might have an opportunity, at stated periods, of renewing their acknowledgments for it. It cannot, even, but be matter of the greatest astonishment, that any persons, professing themselves to be Christians, should slight or neglect such easy means of obtaining the highest spiritual blessings, when our blessed Saviour, knowing the frailties of our nature and how apt we are to forget the most necessary duties, expressly instituted and ordained these holy mysteries, pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort.

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Suppose

Suppose that a beloved friend, or benefactor, had, upon his death-bed, made some request to us, should we think ourselves at liberty to neglect it? do we not, on the contrary, exert our utmost endeavors to carry his wishes into execution; notwithstanding any difficulties which we may find in the way? and shall we be less anxious to obey the last and dying command of our best friend and heavenly benefactor; a command given for our own sakes only, and to draw us nearer to God and himself?

I am apt to believe that too many amongst us are inattentive to this holy institution, from the ease with which we may be admitted to it; and that, from the perverseness of human nature, had it been a work of difficulty, more pains would have been taken to enjoy it. We have an example of this nature, in the fifth chapter of the second book of Kings; where Naaman, the Syrian, having applied to the prophet Elisha to cure him of his leprosy, and being directed to wash in the
river

Suppose that a beloved friend, had, upon his death, some request to us, should give ourselves at liberty to neglect; on the contrary, exert our efforts to carry his wishes into effect notwithstanding any difficulties we may find in the way? and be ourselves anxious to obey the last command of our best friend and benefactor; a command given in tears only, and to draw near to him and himself?

I am apt to believe that amongst us are inattentive to this invitation, from the ease with which it may be admitted to it; and that the weakness of human nature, the work of difficulty, more particularly when it has been taken to enjoy it. The example of this nature, in the story of the second book of Kings, Naaman, the Syrian, having been sent by the prophet Elisha to cure his leprosy, and being directed to wash

in the river Jordan and be clean, was unwilling to go away, because the proposal made to him appeared so insignificant and unattended with the pomp and ceremony he expected. The arguments employed by his servants upon this occasion, are worthy of attention, as particularly applicable to the present subject. "But, if the prophet had bid thee do this great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, will thou obey his voice, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean."

If we have been at any time dissatisfied with Naaman in rejecting the means of cure of a much worse disease than his, (as says Solomon, in the 10th chapter of The Proverbs, "The cure of a man will sustain his infirmity," "a wounded spirit who can be healed?") because too easily attainable, let us follow the example of his repentance, and immediately accept of our Lord's kind and affectionate invitation, with true faith in his gracious promises.

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To the sincere and zealous Christian few parts of his religion afford more solid comfort and happiness, than the liberty given him of appearing as a guest at his Lord's table, and pleading with him, as it were, personally, his gracious promises. When we consider that, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament, we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us; we shall be at a loss for words to express our thanks and adoration for such infinite goodness. Nor are those advantages confined to the time of receiving it: for, if we are sincere in our endeavors to discharge this duty as we ought, the blessed influence of it will remain in our minds, and greatly assist us in every good work.

Let us now consider the various excuses made for the neglect of this holy institution, and the weakness and danger of them. These are so forcibly set forth in
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To the sincere and zealous few parts of his religion as solid comfort and happiness liberty given him of approaching his Lord's table, and pleasure; it were, personally, his pastimes. When we consider a true penitent heart and how to receive that holy sacrament, with the flesh of Christ and drink dwell in Christ and Christ be one with Christ and Christ shall be at a loss for words thanks and adoration for his labours. Nor are those advantages to the time of receiving it are sincere in our endeavours to perform this duty as we ought, the absence of it will remain in our hearts greatly afflict us in every good. Now consider the various reasons for the neglect of this duty and the weakness and delay. These are so forcibly set forth

the exhortation contained in our service, that, I am persuaded, I can better than to transcribe, and to call the attention of my reader.

"I beseech you, for the Lord Christ's sake, that ye will not refuse to come thereto; being so lovingly and bidden by God himself. Ye know how grievous and unkind a thing it is when a man hath prepared a rich dinner, and decked his table with all kind of provision, so that there lacketh nothing for the guests to sit down, and yet they are called (without any cause) and they thankfully refuse to come: would you, in such a case, would not be angry? Who would not think a great injury and wrong done unto him? Therefore, most dearly-beloved in Christ, take ye good heed, lest ye withdraw yourselves from this holy supper, lest God's indignation against you be an easy matter for a man to say, 'I will not communicate, because I am too weakly hindered with worldly labours.'

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“but such excuses are not so easily ac-
 “cepted, and allowed before God. If
 “any man say, I am a grievous sinner,
 “and therefore am afraid to come:
 “wherefore then do ye not repent and
 “amend? When God calleth you, are
 “ye not ashamed to say, you will not
 “come? When ye should return to God,
 “will ye excuse yourselves, and say ye are
 “not ready? Consider earnestly with
 “yourselves, how little such feigned ex-
 “cuses will avail before God. They that
 “refused the feast in the Gospel, because
 “they had bought a farm, or would try
 “their yokes of oxen, or because they
 “were married, were not so excused, but
 “counted unworthy of the heavenly feast.”

Let it not, however, be supposed, from
 the earnestness with which all Christians
 are exhorted to be frequent partakers of
 the Lord's supper, that they may therefore
 go carelessly, or without a steady faith,
 sincere repentance, and fixed purpose of
 amending in future whatever has been
 amiss in their former lives; but let them
 consider

consider that all this, though indispensibly necessary to render them worthy communicants, is equally so to prepare them for death. And will any man, sensible, as he must be from every day's experience, of the uncertainty of human life, sit down quietly under the conviction that, if called upon at a minute's warning to give up his accounts, he is totally unprepared for it? Nor is this one of the least of the advantages of frequently communicating:—namely, that, if we set about it as we ought, our souls, notwithstanding the frailties of our nature, cannot be plunged deep in guilt, nor our consciences become seared; as may, I fear, be but too frequently the case, with those who neglect to call themselves often to accounts. I am fully convinced, that no person, who went, with honest intentions, to the Lord's supper, ever returned from it without being both better and happier.

The Passover, which was ordained by God to preserve in the minds of the Jews a lasting and grateful impression of his

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great mercy in delivering them from the Egyptian bondage, was ordered to be kept with such strictness, that, if any of the children of Israel presumed to taste leavened bread for seven days, he was to be put to death; (the Egyptians having thrust them out before their dough was leavened). How infinitely superior is the mercy we commemorate at the Lord's table! Let us, therefore, observe equal strictness so to prepare ourselves, that we may not be rejected for presuming to appear there without a proper frame of mind to render the holy mysteries efficacious to our souls. We are constantly reminded of our duty, as often as we attend the public worship of God: the fault, therefore, must be in ourselves, if we are not acceptable guests. St. Paul has instructed us how necessary self-examination is, upon this solemn occasion. When we contemplate the vast, nay, infinite distance between God our Saviour and ourselves, how ought we to be humbled, and to search into our hearts, that we may purify

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them before we appear as his guests.

Here, I am afraid, the very best amongst us will find but too much reason that our tears flow for the many imperfections of our best performances.

Our Saviour tells us: "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find."

He says again: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in my name, he will give it unto you."

Let us therefore consider, before we go to the Lord's table, what spiritual gifts we stand most in need of; and

first, with all humility, lay claim to this Saviour's most gracious promise. For

instance: if we are inclined to be thoughtless and inattentive to our religious duties,

increase of piety and steadiness are the graces we most want and should pray for;

if we are addicted to pride and passion, which St. James says, "If any man among you seem to be religious and

bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain,"

then humility and meekness are what we should ask for. In like manner, we

Qqq should

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should examine ourselves respecting every Christian virtue ; for as the tree is known by its fruit, so is the true Christian by the command and subjection to which he has reduced all those vicious passions, which are so pernicious both to their possessor and to society. As the grace of God is offered to all, without money and without price, the poor are sure to find as kind a reception as the rich : for though at temporal feasts they would find little or no attention, they are, at their Lord's table, upon a footing with the greatest princes : God is no respecter of person, or outward appearances, but those only who honor him will he honor.

Having endeavored to explain the nature of this holy sacrament, the means of preparing ourselves to receive it worthily, and the benefits we may expect to derive from it, I cannot quit the subject without adding a few words as to our behaviour afterwards.

Let us not suppose, at the conclusion of this feast, that our work is over and
our

our triumph complete, and that we may return to a state of carelessness and indifference, till the next communion: the Christian religion is a state of warfare, against the sinful lusts of the flesh, and requires our constant vigilance to prevent their gaining ground upon us. We must watch and pray, that we may be enabled to present ourselves at every succeeding sacrament, better prepared than at the former; addressing ourselves to the throne of grace, in the words of Solomon, (I. Kings, chap. viii. ver. 58.): "That he
 " may incline our hearts unto him, to
 " walk in all his ways, and to keep his
 " commandments, and his statutes, and
 " his judgments, which he commanded
 " our fathers."

We must, as Moses did, bring the tables of the testimony in our hands; that is, we must constantly confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Saviour; and this must always be done to the honor and glory of God, the Father; as his loving kindness to mankind was the original

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spring of man's redemption : it was he that gave his only-begotten Son, and delivered him up to death, for us all, reconciling the world to himself in Christ.

Glory, therefore, eternal glory, be unto God in the highest ! because, in Christ, there is on earth peace and good-will towards men. We can never be sufficiently thankful for this inestimable gift of our redemption ; as that is the foundation and fore-runner of every other gift. Let this holy joy speak encouragement to our souls to proceed in our Christian profession, with steady and constant piety, that we may faithfully keep those solemn vows which we have made at God's altar. Let us so employ our precious time, as to make each approach to our Lord's table the source of increased delight ; and then we may be assured that, at each repetition, we shall be more welcome guests ; and, should we be called hence without warning, we may with reasonable hopes expect to enter into our Lord's presence with joy.

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spring of man's redemption: that gave his only-begotten Son, and delivered him up to death, for redeeming the world to himself in his own blood.

Glory, therefore, eternal praise to God in the highest! because there is on earth peace and good-will towards men. We can never be thankful for this inestimable gift of redemption; as that is the foundation-stone of every other gift. Let us with joy speak encouragement to ourselves to proceed in our Christian profession. Ready and constant piety, that we faithfully keep those solemn vows we have made at God's altar. Let us employ our precious time, at each approach to our Lord's table, as a source of increased delight; and let us be assured that, at each repetition, we shall be more welcome guests. Should we be called hence without having received the sacrament, we may with reasonable hope enter into our Lord's presence.

May God, of his infinite mercy, fill our hearts with such a lively sense of his love to us in the institution of this ordinance, and of the inestimable advantages we may derive from it, that we neither flight or neglect it, under any and absurd pretences on the one hand, nor, on the other, be guilty of presumption of approaching it unprepared, and without due preparation! Let us pardon all our past transgressions of this nature, and give us grace to recover our lost time, by frequently and worthily taking of it for the future; grant us this for the sake of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, that we may constantly receive the holy sacrament those comforts and blessings which he has promised to those who receive it worthily! Amen.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XIV.

“ 1. **L**ET not your heart be troubled:
“ ye believe in God, believe also
“ in me.

“ 2. In my Father's house are many
“ mansions : if it were not so, I would
“ have told you. I go to prepare a place
“ for you.

“ 3. And if I go and prepare a place
“ for you, I will come again, and receive
“ you unto myself ; that where I am,
“ there ye may be also.

“ 4. And whither I go ye know, and
“ the way ye know.”

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CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XIV.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also. And whither I go ye know: and whither I go ye know."

Having now but little time to be on earth, our blessed Lord employed himself in preparing his disciples for a melancholy event of which they were to be witnesses; calling upon them that faith they professed in God, to rest also implicitly in him and the promises he had made them, which he taught them to submit with humble resignation to all God's dispensations.

For this purpose, he urges every consideration which might be likely to console them, and enable them to bear his loss with patience. He points out to them, that he was not about to desert them, but was merely going before to prepare a place for them in his Father's house, and would come again to take them with him to those blissful mansions, where they were to reside with him to all eternity. In his Father's house, he tells them, were 'many mansions,' and he was going to prepare for them mansions were best calculated to promote their happiness; and not for them alone, but for all his faithful disciples.

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says, (I. Corinth. chap. xv. ver. 41. 42.):
 “ There is one glory of the sun, another
 “ glory of the moon, and another glory of
 “ the stars; for one star differeth from
 “ another star in glory. So also is the
 “ resurrection of the dead.” From this
 doctrine, I conceive, we are to understand
 that, at the resurrection, we shall be placed
 in such different situations and degrees of
 happiness, or mercy, as by our conduct and
 attainments we have merited, or rendered
 ourselves capable of: and this seems per-
 fectly consistent both with the goodness
 and justice of God. Let me not be un-
 derstood, in making use of the word *merit*,
 to insinuate that our actions can in them-
 selves be at all meritorious: but our gra-
 cious God has promised, to our honest
 endeavors, to add the merits of our blessed
 Saviour; by which means they will be-
 come acceptable in his sight. In this sense,
 therefore, and this alone, I desire to be
 understood, when I speak of human merit:

The Almighty intended all his creatures
 for the enjoyment of happiness; and, hav-
 ing

formed them after his own image, the happiness prepared for them must consist in pure and spiritual enjoyments. He created them on this earth, not merely to make trial of their obedience to his laws, but that they might have an opportunity of attaining those virtues and graces without which they would be incapable of enjoying the felicity prepared for them: accordingly, the degree of happiness they are to receive in a future state must, inevitably, depend on the degree of perfection which they have attained in this; and their misery, if they have preferred the advice of sin and Satan, must be regulated in like manner. This doctrine seems, to be, equally conformable to reason and to revelation. If we suppose the joys of Heaven to be of a pure and spiritual nature, a vicious man would find a hell even in heaven itself. Can he, for instance, whose life has been spent in oaths and curses, find happiness in the praises of that being whom he has made the object of his blasphemies? or the man who has

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sacrificed every consideration to the indulgence of malice and revenge, enjoy that perfect love and charity which reigns in Heaven and must embrace the whole universe? Further examples are unnecessary: these are, surely, sufficient to shew that the mind addicted to vice cannot enjoy the rewards of virtue: what, then, becomes of the doctrine of a death-bed repentance; in the confidence of which so many people find comfort, and are encouraged to persevere in their vicious courses? Far be it from me to attempt to set bounds to the mercy of God, who has promised pardon to all that shall truly repent; but since, if my reasoning is just, little less than a miracle would be sufficient to render the habitual sinner capable of the joys of Heaven, by changing his corrupt into spiritual affections, to trust to a death-bed repentance is, surely, too dangerous an experiment.

In the first place, who can tell that he shall not be called on suddenly to give up his accounts, whilst indulging in the most
vicious

sacrificed every consideration of malice and revenge, that perfect love and charity in Heaven and must embrace the universe? Further examples are necessary: these are, surely, to shew that the mind addicted to sin, not enjoy the rewards of virtue, then, becomes of the doctrine of death-bed repentance; in the course of which so many people find themselves encouraged to persevere in vicious courses? Far be it from me to attempt to set bounds to the mercy who has promised pardon to all who truly repent; but since, if my view is just, little less than a miracle is sufficient to render the habit of sin capable of the joys of Heaven, by turning his corrupt into spiritual affections, trust to a death-bed repentance is too dangerous an experiment.

In the first place, who can tell how all not be called on suddenly to give accounts, whilst indulging in

vicious courses? What then becomes intended repentance? We know it is none in the grave. But let us suppose after a lingering sickness, he is on the bed of death, and that he is shortly be called into the presence of the Judge: is this a time, when he is racked with pain, and his mind is distracted with just terror upon so important a work as that of forming resolutions of amendment? what assistance can he expect from that offended Being, to whose whole conduct has been a constant sorrow for sin cannot be deemed repentance except attended by a determination of amendment: and his supposition is, probably, nothing more than a dread of punishment, which is thrown aside the moment he is covered. But I will suppose him how can he, who has given up his life and health to the service of God when on the brink of the grave

sin no longer, the aid of God's grace to new-model his heart, or suppose that the offer of his miserable, emaciated body and corrupted affections will be accepted by him? I repeat, that though God is all-merciful, and, seeing into the inmost recesses of the heart, may discover true repentance, and accept it, yet the stake is too important to put to such a hazard.

The two parts of Scripture generally brought in support of the efficacy of a death-bed repentance are, the parable of the laborers working in the vineyard, and the promise given by our Lord to the repentant thief on the cross. The first appears, to me, totally inapplicable to the subject, and to allude rather to the calling in of the Gentiles, who, upon their admission to Christianity, were considered in the same light as the Jews: these latter murmured greatly at it, and claimed a decided superiority over the Gentiles; which the apostle positively denied to them. It could not have alluded to the day of judgment; since some of the laborers

boners are represented as murmuring against their Lord, for the inadequate reward allotted to their services, and complaining that others, who had not deserved so much, were put upon a footing with themselves. How different must we suppose the feelings of the happy souls who are admitted into those mansions of bliss; where even the least of the joys prepared for the righteous, are such as no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man to conceive. They will be so far from wishing to alter their own situation, or from murmuring at the lot of others, that the felicity of all around them will greatly heighten their own.

With respect to the thief on the cross; we must consider that, during the period he had lain in prison previous to his execution, he had had time to repent of his past wicked life, and had, probably, heard of the fame of Jesus and become a convert to his doctrine; but whether this were the case or not, how great must have been his

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his faith, who, seeing our Lord insulted, reviled, and at last brought to the same ignominious death with himself, could, under such circumstances (and even at the time when his own chosen disciples had forsaken him and fled) acknowledge him as the Son of God and Saviour of the world! Such a faith must have included in it a steady and unalterable purpose of amendment of life, had the opportunity offered; and, as such, was accepted by his Saviour.

Since this is the only solitary instance they can bring in support of their hopes, and this affords such strong proofs of the sincerity of the pardoned sinner's repentance and steady faith, let us not trust our eternal salvation upon such slender grounds, but endeavor so to live, and so constantly to look into the state of our souls, that, should we be called on suddenly, we may not be found unprepared; but, having our lamps trimmed, may enter in with the Bridegroom.

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his faith, who, seeing our Lord reviled, and at last brought to an ignominious death with him under such circumstances as the time when his own disciples had forsaken him and fled, and him as the Son of God and Saviour of the world! Such a faith must have in it a steady and unalterable purpose of amendment of life, had the opportunity offered; and, as such, was seen in his Saviour.

Since this is the only solid ground they can bring in support of their faith, and this affords such strong proof of the sincerity of the pardoned sinners, and steady faith, let us not neglect our eternal salvation upon such slender grounds, but endeavor so to live, and so to look into the state of our souls, that we be called on suddenly, and not be found unprepared; but, as lamps trimmed, may enter in to the Bridegroom.

Our blessed Lord, in the above parable, takes the same method of comforting his disciples, as would be used by a parent about to quit his children for a time: encouraging them by assurance that he is most likely to satisfy them at his return. He points out to them, that their duty and interest requires that he should visit them, to prepare better habitations for them; and that he would return and be with them with him, never again to be separated. Shall, then, those who have such glorious prospects to look forward to, murmur and be discontented at their present situation; because, in their present abode, the eternal habitations promised them, they must meet with some temporary troubles and inconveniences? Ought they not to be grateful to their heavenly Father, that they can be but of short duration, and trust, in full confidence, to his goodness, that they are necessary; or God, that he has shined in the happiness of all his children, would not have imposed them upon them. And shall man, weak man, who

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quently at a loss to understand the actions of his fellow-mortals, presume to judge of the ways of God ; to whose councils he is not admitted, and whose wise dispensations must be so much above his limited comprehension ? As well might the clay say to the potter, Why hast thou fashioned me thus ?

Let us, therefore, in perfect assurance that the way pointed out to us by Infinite Wisdom is the only safe and certain road to happiness, persevere in it to the end, in spite of any obstacles we may encounter in the course of it.

Our Lord having added, that they knew whither he was going, and the way ;

“ 5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the way ?

“ 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

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quently at a loss to understand of his fellow-mortals, prefer the ways of God ; to whose will not admitted, and whose will must be so much above his comprehension ? As well might we say to the potter, Why hast thou made me thus ?

Let us, therefore, in pursuit of that the way pointed out to us, Wisdom is the only safe and sure to happiness, persevere in it to the spite of any obstacles we may meet the course of it.

Our Lord having added, that whither he was going, and the way

“ 5. Thomas saith unto him, I know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way ?

“ 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father by me.”

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From comparing the above declaration of our blessed Lord, that he is ‘ the way, and the truth, and the life,’ with the passage in the Gospel by St. Matthew chapter vii. verses 13. 14. (“ Enter ye in at the strait gate : for wide is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”) we shall, I think, be able to discern the true meaning of the latter passage, which, according to my idea, has been greatly misconstrued, in supposing a declaration that the greatest part of mankind should perish, notwithstanding the means of salvation so dearly purchased by the sufferings and death of Christ. To understand many passages of Scripture, it is necessary to apply them in context : now it appears to me, on considering the two passages with reference to each other, that ‘ the way’ and ‘ the strait gate’ are intended to describe

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Christian religion; which might, during the life-time of our blessed Lord, be very properly called 'strait' and 'narrow;' as the knowledge of it was then confined to a small corner of the earth, and it labored under the great disadvantages of opposing the darling passions of mankind, and requiring of its converts to give up all the pleasures and interests of this life, for a new system; the author and teachers of which appeared in so poor and mean a situation, that many who could not withhold their belief were yet ashamed to confess it and to sacrifice all their boasted learning and philosophy at the cross of a crucified Saviour, and to submit to be taught by ignorant fishermen and mechanics. I am confirmed in this opinion, by the next verse of the same chapter of St. Matthew: "Beware of false prophets, " which come to you in sheep's clothing, " but inwardly they are ravening wolves." They taught the broad way that leadeth to destruction, in opposition to the narrow and strait way of the Gospel; which

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Christian religion; which might be the life-time of our blessed Lord, properly called 'strait' and 'new', the knowledge of it was then in a small corner of the earth, and under the great disadvantage of the darling passions of mankind, requiring of its converts to give up pleasures and interests of the old system; the author and teacher, which appeared in so poor a situation, that many who could not hold their belief were yet ashamed to confess it and to sacrifice all their learning and philosophy at the feet of the crucified Saviour, and to follow him taught by ignorant fishermen and peasants. I am confirmed in this opinion by the next verse of the same chapter, Matthew: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening beasts. They taught the broad way that leads to destruction, in opposition to the narrow and strait way of the Gospel."

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was to take up our cross, and to follow the Lord. But, after his death, when the gift of the Holy Ghost the apostles enabled to address their doctrines in their own languages and to introduce themselves into the different parts of the world for that purpose, the Gospel went forth with incredible swiftness; the gates of the kingdom were widened, and made free of access to all who accepted of the cross of Christ, which he intended as a lasting reproach to the pride and glory of all ranks, from the peasant to the sovereign.

Let us not suppose, however, that because the way is made easier, therefore be careless and remiss in the passage through it; for if we wish to fulfil the conditions required of us, we are by baptism admitted into the Christian community, by a sincere and hearty repentance where we have done amiss; a redoubling of the utmost of our power, of our diligence, of the good we have committed; an amendment of our life; and a constant dependence

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God's grace (which we are commanded to apply for through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ), it will be of no advantage to us that the way to eternal life has been rendered more easy of access.

" 7. If ye had known me, ye should
" have known my Father also: and from
" henceforth ye know him, and have seen
" him.

" 8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew
" us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

" 9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been
" so long time with you, and yet hast thou
" not known me, Philip? he that hath
" seen me hath seen the Father; and how
" sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

" 10. Believest thou not that I am in
" the Father, and the Father in me? the
" words that I speak unto you, I speak
" not of myself: but the Father, that
" dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

" 11. Believe me that I am in the Fa-
" ther, and the Father in me: or else be-
" lieve me for the very works' sake."

From

God's grace (which we are to apply for through the mediation of Jesus Christ), it was an advantage to us that the way of life has been rendered more clear.

"7. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: and henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."

"8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

"9. Jesus saith unto him, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: for I have long time with you, and yet ye have not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and yet ye say, Shew us the Father."

"10. Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, that I speak unto you of myself: but the Father dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

"11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else how can ye believe me for the very works sake?"

From the above passage it is plain that the disciples still misunderstood our Lord, and, taking his words in a carnal sense, supposed that he was merely pointing them to some part of the country which they were strangers. Jesus, therefore, to undeceive them, points out the spiritual sense of what he had said. He says, That he was the way, the truth, and the life: that is, that a firm belief in, and observance of his doctrines, was the true and only way of acquiring for themselves the happiness he offered them. He adds, If they had known of gaining admittance into the Father, where there is joy and peace more. He adds, If they had known they would have known the Father: that is, if they had followed his commands and instructions to sink deep into their minds, they would by this time have known the nature of God the Father. Philip, who could not yet elevate his mind to the spiritual sense of our Lord's words, requests that they may see the Father, personally: — a strange

from one who, having so long benefited by the conversation of Jesus, must have known that the Almighty had expressly declared to Moses, (Exodus, chap. xxxiii. ver. 20.) "Thou canst not see my face :
" for there shall no man see me and live."

In the reply of our Saviour, we cannot but admire his unwearied patience and perseverance to enlighten the dull and slow apprehensions of his disciples. This should serve as a lesson to all who undertake the work of instructing the ignorant, that they should not be disheartened, much less rendered impatient by the stupidity of their pupils ; but, with that meekness and gentleness so conspicuous in their great Master, should persevere till they have effected their point. How amply such care and trouble will be rewarded, we may learn from Scripture : this is one of the ways by which we may lay up treasure for ourselves which fadeth not away.

At Philip's request that they might see the Father, our Lord expresses his surprise ;

from one who, having to him by the conversation of Jesus, known that the Almighty was declared to Moses, (Exodus ver. 20.) "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live."

In the reply of our Saviour, but admire his unwearied perseverance to enlighten their slow apprehensions of his doctrine, should serve as a lesson to all who take the work of instructing the ignorant, that they should not be disheartened or rendered impatient by the slowness of their pupils; but, with that patience and gentleness so conspicuous in our great Master, should persevere till they have effected their point. How much care and trouble will be necessary to may learn from Scripture: of the ways by which we may assure for ourselves which is the true way.

At Philip's request that they might see the Father, our Lord expresses his

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prize; since, in his spiritual nature, he had often before told them, and repeated,) He and his Father were one: "I was in the Father, and the Father was in me." The precepts and doctrines which he taught them, proceeded not from himself alone, but equally from the Father who dwelt in him: they, therefore, who had been so long with him, had fully known the Father, as far as in that state they could see and know. But as our Lord never wished to require a blind obedience on any one, he appeals to those miracles, which God could perform, for the truth of the doctrines he taught them.

"12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he that believeth on me, the works which I do shall he do also; and greater than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."

"13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

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“ 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my
“ name, I will do it.”

The promise here given, as far as it relates to the performance of miracles thro’ faith in Christ Jesus, must be considered as confined to the apostles : not so the other part of it : this extends to every Christian : and shall we neglect to take advantage of so glorious and consolatory a privilege ? We have only to ask and receive. How easy are the terms ! how great the blessing !

The expression made use of by our Saviour, ‘ And greater works than these shall he do,’ seems to allude to the conversion of the Gentile world ; a work which, from the infinite benefit it conferred on so great a portion of mankind, was certainly still greater than the giving sight to the blind, feet to the lame, or even raising of the dead to life : this honor Christ left to his disciples.

“ 15. If ye love me, keep my com-
“ mandments :

“ 16. And

“ 16. And I will pray the Father, and
“ he shall give you another Comforter,
“ that he may abide with you for ever ;

“ 17. Even the Spirit of truth, whom
“ the world cannot receive, because it
“ seeth him not, neither knoweth him :
“ but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with
“ you, and shall be in you.

“ 18. I will not leave you comfortless ;
“ I will come to you.

“ 19. Yet a little while, and the world
“ seeth me no more ; but ye see me : be-
“ cause I live, ye shall live also.

“ 20. At that day ye shall know that I
“ am in my Father, and you in me, and I
“ in you.

“ 21. He that hath my commandments,
“ and keepeth them, he it is that loveth
“ me ; and he that loveth me shall be
“ loved of my Father, and I will love him,
“ and will manifest myself to him.”

We, as well as the apostles to whom
this discourse was addressed, have here
pointed out to us a test of our love to our

Ttt blessed

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bleſſed Lord ; nor can any thing be more natural. Do we not always ſtrive to act according to what we know to be the wiſh of thoſe we love ? Is it poſſible that any more eaſy terms could have been offered to us ? Well might our Saviour ſay, My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light. Let us, for a moment, conſider what it is that is required of us : nothing more than to ‘love him’ to whom we are indebted for every hope of happineſs, and who purchaſed this bleſſing for us at the price of his own blood ; for if we love him, we ſhall do as he would have us.

It was not by unavailing ſorrow that the apoſtles were to ſhew their love for their Maſter, and concern at his departure ; but by keeping his commandments : and for their encouragement he promiſed them the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, to abide with them for ever. And theſe gracious promiſes we may all apply, under certain limitations, to ourſelves ; more particularly when we have ſevere trials to ſtruggle with ; but we ſhould remember,
that

blessed Lord; nor can any thing
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 according to what we know
 ish of those we love? Is it
 y more easy terms could be
 ed to us? Well might
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 omises we may all apply
 imitations, to ourselves; not
 ly when we have severe trials
 ith; but we should remember

that this 'Spirit of truth' abides
 godly only. Happy are those who
 stantly entertain such a friend
 cautious ought we to be, not to
 the divine guest to leave us;
 grand enemy, who never loses an
 tunity, should enter in and make
 times worse than before.

The disciples, according to the
 here given, had the comfort and
 nels of seeing our Lord many times
 his resurrection, although the blessing
 not granted to the world in general
 is not mere professions which will
 us to the favor of God, or to be
 by our Master, at the last day: we
 must be active, and manifested by
 conscientious discharge of all those
 which, in our respective stations
 quired of us.

" 22. Judas saith unto him, (C
 " riot,) Lord, how is it that thou
 " manifest thyself unto us, and not
 " the world?

Ttt 2

" 2

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“ 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If
“ a man love me, he will keep my words:
“ and my Father will love him, and we
“ will come unto him, and make our
“ abode with him.

“ 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth
“ not my sayings: and the word which
“ ye hear is not mine, but the Father's
“ which sent me.

“ 25. These things have I spoken unto
“ you, being yet present with you.

“ 26. But the Comforter, which is the
“ Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send
“ in my name, he shall teach you all
“ things, and bring all things to your
“ remembrance, whatsoever I have said
“ unto you.

“ 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace
“ I give unto you: not as the world
“ giveth, give I unto you. Let not your
“ heart be troubled, neither let it be
“ afraid.”

Our blessed Lord, who was all patience
and benignity, encouraged his disciples to
ask

"23. Jesus answered and said:

"a man love me, he will hear

"and my Father will love

"will come unto him, and

"abode with him.

"24. He that loveth me

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into you.

"27. Peace I leave with you, as

give unto you: not as the

world giveth, give I unto you. Let

your heart be troubled, neither let

it fail."

Our blessed Lord, who was always

in his own right, encouraged his

ask explanations, whenever they clearly comprehend him. Their (a quality which always attends truth) would not let them imagine any distinction intended to them: that to have been the cause of the question asked. Our Saviour replies, That love and obedience, manifested would ensure them the favor of who, with himself, would make with them: that is, that the holy God would ever be present to them.

Let us, then, to whom the power equally made, sanctify our bodies, temples worthy to become the abode of such heavenly guests. The apostle's want of a due attention, or right standing of some of our Saviour's disciples had suffered them to slip out of his memories; but our Lord, who was indulgent to the frailties of human promises them, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, a perfect recollection of things he had taught them, that a his might not be lost.

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Peace be with you, or, Peace go along with you, was a very common salutation amongst the Jews ; as we learn from many parts of Scripture. This was often said, when nothing was further from the wish of the speaker. Such was not the manner in which our Lord's peace was given. These words from him were of efficacy sufficient to remove both the fears and troubles of the apostles. We are assured that this peace, which passeth all understanding, in a particular manner attends his faithful servants, at the blessed sacrament.

“ 28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”

The most convincing proof we can give of sincere and disinterested affection, is to prefer the good of another to our own pleasure or gratification : our Lord, therefore,

Peace be with you, or, Peace with you, was a very common salutation amongst the Jews; as we learn from several parts of Scripture. This was the case when nothing was further from the mind of the speaker. Such was the manner in which our Lord's peace was given. These words from him were sufficient to remove both the fears and troubles of the apostles. We are told that this peace, which passed from him to his faithful servants, at the blessed moment.

"28. Ye have heard how I have said to you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would believe that I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I."

The most convincing proof we have of sincere and disinterested affection is to prefer the good of another to our own safety or gratification: our Lord

fore, tells his disciples, That they should rejoice at his departure when they reflected on the glory which awaited on his return to his Father. This was also an additional motive for joy, although they did not then clearly perceive it; it being more for their interest, as honor, that he should leave them. Of this blessed truth they were soon convinced, and greatly rejoiced in it, that their beloved Master's human nature was exalted to the regions of immortality.

The latter part of the foregoing passage, in which Christ says, That his Father is greater than he, has given rise to many different opinions, because, upon other occasions, he speaks of himself as equal: I and my Father are one; All men must honor the Son as they honor the Father; with others, equally strong. The passage, however, seems perfectly reconcileable with those I have just quoted, and the meaning may be this: that altho' equal to the Father in his divine nature, yet, for the salvation of mankind, he had voluntarily

to the Father.

“ 29. And now I have to
“ it come to pass, that when
“ pass, ye might believe.

“ 30. Hereafter I will n
“ with you : for the prince
“ cometh, and hath nothing

“ 31. But that the world
“ that I love the Father ; an
“ ther gave me commandm
“ do. Arise, let us go hence

Our Lord, who knew the
nature, and the unsteadiness
resolves, thought it necessary
the apostles for the indigniti
ings which he was to suffer.

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ecessary for the redemption of a lost world and as an atonement to his father's offended justice, was voluntary on his part) their faith in him might have been weakened. And further to comfort and support them, he assures them That the prince of this world (by which is meant the grand adversary and accuser of mankind,) would find no spot, or blemish, in him, on which to rest an accusation: it being necessary that he, who was to stand the place of sinners, should himself be spotless and without blemish.

Our Saviour, by telling his disciples that he should not talk much more with them, seems to call particularly for their attention to his last injunctions: the whole of the remainder of the time, till Judas betrayed him, was employed in instructing them; and there can be no doubt that they treasured up every word which issued from the mouth of their divine Master.

Grant, gracious God, that we also may
be so attentive to thy word and com-
 Uuu mand-

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mandments as contained in the sacred writings, that, spending our whole time in thy service and to thy honor and glory, when it shall please thee to call us hence, we may be owned and accepted by thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and, through his merits and mediation, may obtain a portion in those eternal mansions which he is gone before to prepare for them that love him. Amen; Amen.

CHAPTER

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CHAPTER THE NINETEEN

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XV.

" 1. **I** AM the true vine, and my
 " father is the husbandman.

" 2. Every branch in me that
 " doth not fruit, he taketh away: and
 " every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth
 " that it may bring forth more fruit.

" 3. Now ye are clean, through the
 " word which I have spoken unto you.

" 4. Abide in me, and I in you, then
 " the branch cannot bear fruit
 " except it abide in the vine;
 " can ye, except ye abide in me."

As the vine sustains the branches,
 so he causes them to bear fruit for the

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the husbandman, so, in like manner, our blessed Lord sustains, guards, and protects his faithful servants; to present them, through his merits and sufferings, an acceptable people to his and our Father, who is in Heaven. This parable must have produced the greater effect on the minds of the auditors, as it was delivered just after he had sanctified the fruit of the vine by making it an emblem of his blood, in the institution of the holy sacrament. Many reasons may be given for his so frequently comparing himself to a vine: from the number of vineyards, and the prodigious produce of the vine in that country, the great care and attention to the cultivation of it might bear some faint resemblance to our Lord's care of, and attention to, the improvement of his disciples; besides, these objects so constantly presented themselves to their view, that they could never forget the discourses which were drawn from them. It is true, that there is the same union between all other trees and their branches, as between the
vine

the husbandman, so, in the blessed Lord sustains, guards his faithful servants; to give through his merits and satisfaction acceptable people to his Father who is in Heaven. This may have produced the greater minds of the auditors, as it was just after he had sanctified the vine by making it an emblem in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Many reasons may be given for the present comparing himself to the number of vineyards. The odigious produce of the vine in the country, the great care and cultivation of it might bear resemblance to our Lord's cultivation to, the improvement of his disciples; besides, these objects so connected themselves to their view could never forget the grapes were drawn from them. There is the same union between the vine and their branches, as between

the vine and its branches: yet, in this there is a difference; that, whereas other fruit-trees, although barren, put to some use, the vine, in this fit for nothing but to be burned, other fruit-tree could therefore so forth the difference between a true faithful Christian and the deceitful hypocritical one, as the fruitful and barren branches of the vine. The husbandman watches his vine, with the utmost care; nor does he lop off any of its branches till he has tried every method to improve them: the least hopes of their recovery will induce the lord of the vine to try them another season; but if, in his endeavors, they continue to disappoint his hopes, he orders them at length to be cut down and cast into the fire: in proportion to his just and reasonable expectations of their produce, so is his disappointment at their failure.

In like manner does God deal with his sinful creatures. By his constant care and protection of us, and by his

and forbearance, which is intended to lead us to repentance, he warns us of the danger of sin, by the means of our conscience; which never fails, except when seared by long habits of vice, to upbraid us for our wicked actions. The light of nature teaches thus far. How careful, then, ought all those to be, who have the light of Christ's gospel to direct them: we may learn the necessity of this caution from the second chapter of Revelations, v. 5. and from numberless other texts of Scripture: "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

We have a remarkable instance, says Poole, in which this threatening has been made good; for "Where is now the famous church of Ephesus?" Its branch has been, long since, lopped off, and its candlestick removed from the body of Christ's church.

How

How deplorable must be the state of that country which, after having been blest with the light of Christ's glorious gospel, falls back again into its former darkness and ignorance! May this calamity, gracious God, be ever averted from us! and that it may be so, confirm and establish our faith, that we may ever hold fast that blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in thy dear Son, Jesus Christ!

What an excellent emblem is 'a candlestick,' to represent God's church; for as the candlestick contains the light which is to remove the natural darkness, so the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, shines forth in the brightest manner at his house; where our dark minds may be enlightened and improved by the exercise of prayer and praise, and by the explanation of the holy Scriptures given by the shepherds to their flock, thereby enabling them to understand them the better when they peruse them at home.

May

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more likely to return to the path of duty from which they have unfortunately strayed, than those can be to become converts to religion and virtue, who, left to themselves in youth, have passed their lives in the practice of vice and irreligion.

I can conceive no method so likely to ensure God's blessing, both personal and national, as that of giving to youth an early and ardent desire after scripture-knowledge, and exciting in their young minds an emulation after piety and virtue, drawn from the precepts and examples contained in our blessed Lord's divine gospel. Those who adopt this plan in the education of youth, be they high or low, rich or poor, give the greatest blow to infidelity and every kind of wickedness; nor can there be a doubt but that the great advantages arising from such a method will be so materially felt, by succeeding generations, that they will be induced to follow an example which has produced so much happiness and security to themselves. What a delightful reflection must
it

more likely to return to the state from which they have wandered, than those can be to return to religion and virtue, who, in youth, have passed the practice of vice and iniquity.

I can conceive no method to ensure God's blessing, both temporal and eternal, as that of giving an early and ardent desire after knowledge, and exciting in the minds an emulation after piety drawn from the precepts and promises contained in our blessed Lord's gospel. Those who adopt this plan of education of youth, be they high or poor, give the greatest security and every kind of wisdom; and there be a doubt but that the advantages arising from such a plan will be so materially felt, by future generations, that they will be able to show an example which has produced much happiness and security to others. What a delightful reflection

it be to the authors of such institutions that the benefits of them will not terminate with their lives, but will continue to spread and increase, to the honor and to the true and substantial happiness of their fellow-creatures!

Those who agree with me in the necessity of laying an early foundation of piety and virtue in the minds of young people, will not be displeased with the frequent reflections they will meet with on this subject in the course of this work; and those who hold a contrary opinion (if any such there will, I hope, pardon the trespass committed in patience, in consideration of the importance which I affix to it, not on a religious point of view, but as inseparably connected with the peace and welfare of the community in general, in every individual must feel interested.

Our blessed Lord here declares the principles (the traitor having left them) to be free from actual guilt; not by the performance of any works of their own, or the influence of those legal ceremonies

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rification ordained by the Jewish law, but through his word; that is, by means of his divine doctrines, which taught them the true and only way to salvation: but, still, as the branches can bear no fruit if separated from the vine, neither could his disciples, nor can we, perform any good work except we abide in Christ; our union with whom must be constantly kept up by a lively faith in him, and an exact observance of all his laws.

“ 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches:
“ he that abideth in me, and I in him, the
“ same bringeth forth much fruit; for
“ without me ye can do nothing.

“ 6. If a man abide not in me, he is
“ cast forth as a branch, and is withered;
“ and men gather them, and cast them
“ into the fire, and they are burned.

“ 7. If ye abide in me, and my words
“ abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will,
“ and it shall be done unto you.

“ 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that
“ ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my
“ disciples.

“ 9. As

rification ordained by the Father, but through his word; that of his divine doctrines, which is the true and only way to life still, as the branches can be separated from the vine, his disciples, nor can we do good work except we abide in our union with whom much is kept up by a lively faith in the exact observance of all his laws.

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"9. As the Father hath loved me
"I loved you: continue ye in my love."

We cannot perform our duty, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit; Christ has promised shall continue present, to aid and assist those who desire to be God's true and faithful servants. A Christian must ever be advancing towards perfection: ever therefore, should shew forth some virtue; for in this race there is no standing still: if we do not advance in love and virtue, we shall, most certainly, fall back; and every step lost will require ten-fold pains to recover, and render the final triumph more difficult.

God is glorified, when his love, honor, and obey him. This we all do, in our different stations and conditions in life: if we love, we shall glorify him; and

Weak tho' we are, to love is no hard task
And love for love is all that Heav'n does ask

"5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: without me ye can do nothing."
"6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."
"7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
"8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

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Those who would excuse themselves, on the plea that their temptations are greater than they can withstand, will find, upon strict examination, that if *they* had taken the same pains to acquire spiritual blessings which they have employed (and perhaps fruitlessly) in the pursuit of temporal honors and advantages, and the pleasures (as they are called) of this life, they would have been completely successful. Before I quit this subject, I must beg leave to introduce a quotation from a work lately translated from the French, which is particularly applicable to it.

“Thou wilt never possess felicity, till
“thou shalt be able to command thyself,
“and hold over thy passions an undisputed
“empire. Imagine not that this dominion
“is superior to human weakness: descend
“into thyself, my son, and thou wilt ever
“find a principle of virtue ready to combat every vice which may endeavor to
“seduce thee. Thus, in every situation,
“Heaven has provided thee either with
“consolation

consolation or support : take advantage, then, of thy Creator's bounty ; and cease to believe thyself weak, in order only to have an excuse for falling."—*Florian*.

What an unbounded love does our blessed Lord express for his disciples, in comparing with the love of God the Father towards himself ! Since we know the way to continue in his love, can we deserve the name of rational creatures if we run the risk not only of losing so invaluable a treasure, but at the same time of subjecting ourselves to his wrath and its consequence, everlasting punishment ?

' 10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

' 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

' 12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

" 13. Greater

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“ 13. Greater love hath no man than
“ this, that a man lay down his life for
“ his friends.

“ 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do what-
“ soever I command you.

“ 15. Henceforth I call you not ser-
“ vants ; for the servant knoweth not what
“ his lord doeth : but I have called you
“ friends ; for all things that I have heard
“ of my Father I have made known unto
“ you.”

Our Lord often reminds his disciples of the necessity of their love and obedience to him, and of their love and charity towards each other ; which he makes the test of their faith in him. The knowledge he had of the frailty of human nature, and how very apt men are to forget the most important duties, occasioned the frequent repetitions he made use of to impress his doctrines the more firmly on their minds. How could they be otherwise than joyful, when assured of such infinite love on the part of their Lord, and,
through

"13. Greater love hath
 "this, that a man lay down
 "his friends.

"14. Ye are my friends,
 "soever I command you.

"15. Henceforth I call
 "you; for the servant knoweth
 "his lord doeth: but I have
 "called you friends; for all things that I
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 much superior advantages. Much
 is to be learned from a master and
 than from a master only; as the
 friend warrants those free inquiries
 the distant respect from a servant
 master would naturally restrain.

"16. Ye have not chosen me
 "I have chosen you, and ordained y
 "ye should go and bring forth fr
 "that your fruit should remain
 "whatsoever ye shall ask of the Fa
 "my name, he may give it you.
 "17. These things I comma
 "That ye love one another.

Yyy

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“ 18. If the world hate you, ye know
“ that it hated me before it hated you.”

“ 19. If ye were of the world, the
“ world would love his own : but because
“ ye are not of the world, but I have
“ chosen you out of the world, therefore
“ the world hateth you.

“ 20. Remember the word that I said
“ unto you, The servant is not greater
“ than his lord. If they have persecuted
“ me, they will also persecute you : if
“ they have kept my saying, they will
“ keep your's also.”

Our Lord chose his disciples at the commencement of his public ministry : he conferred that honor on them, unsought on their parts : they would never have presumed to have offered themselves to him, knowing how unqualified they were for such an office. Humility, which is so essential in the Christian religion, must have been one of those qualities for which they were selected by our blessed Lord.

The

" 18. If the world had me
" that it hated me before it saw me."

" 19. If ye were of the world,
" world would love his own,
" ye are not of the world,
" chosen you out of the world,
" the world hateth you."

" 20. Remember the words
" unto you, The servant is not
" than his lord. If they have persecuted
" me, they will also persecute you;
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The more insignificant and contemptible
they appeared in the eyes of the world,
the more did it prove the divinity of the
doctrine they were to propagate.

The world, (that is, those whose
affections were fixed upon worldly objects,)
naturally hate them; because they were
to preach, being in direct opposition to the
conduct of the world. This would be
constantly reproaching the world. This
was the case with our Lord during his
life-time; and it was this for which
they hated and persecuted him, to his
death.

Our most laudable affections for
worldly objects must be kept within
bounds, and never be suffered to interfere
with our duty to God, (St. Luke
xiv. verse 26.): " If any man come
to me, and hate not his father, and
mother, and wife, and children, and
brethren, and sisters, yea, and himself,
he cannot be my disciple." These
words are not to be understood in a
literal sense, as supposing that our

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Lord meant we should hate, or even want a due respect, love, and honor, for our different relations and friends : the whole of his gospel teaches us the very reverse, requiring the utmost love and affection amongst such connexions : the meaning of the passage is, evidently, this : that we are not to suffer those affections to interfere with, or prevent the performance of our superior duties to God ; for we must love him, before and above every thing ; we must give up them, and every thing else most dear to us, even life itself, rather than lose his favor : for “ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ” — (St. Mark, chap. viii. ver. 36. 37.)

Our Lord fortifies the minds of his disciples, by letting them see with what resignation and cheerfulness he endured the utmost insolence and cruelty which his enemies could inflict on him, and shews them that, as his ‘ servants and friends,’ they had no right to expect bet-
ter

Our Lord meant we should have a due respect, love, and reverence in different relations and friendships. Of his gospel teaches us that requiring the utmost love amongst such connexions. Of the passage is, evidently, we are not to suffer those affections to interfere with, or prevent the performance of our superior duties to God. We love him, before and above all else most dear to us, even more than lose his favor: for "What profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (St. Mark, chap. viii. ver. 36-37.)

Our Lord fortifies the minds of his disciples, by letting them see that the utmost insolence and cruelty of his enemies could inflict on him no real hurt. He shews them that, as his 'servants,' they had no right to expect

any better treatment from his enemies than he had experienced from them: that their comfort in this world, he would give them. That many who had believed in him would also receive the gospel from him, and become their true and faithful followers.

"21. But all these things will I do unto you for my name's sake, that they know not him that sent me."

"22. If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."

"23. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also."

"24. If I had not done among them works which none other man could do, they had not had sin: but now both have they seen, and hated both me and my Father."

"25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me and my Father."

"

“ 26. But when the Comforter is come,
 “ whom I will send unto you from the Fa-
 “ ther, even the Spirit of truth, which
 “ proceedeth from the Father, he shall
 “ testify of me.

“ 27. And ye also shall bear witness,
 “ because ye have been with me from the
 “ beginning.”

Our Lord, continuing his discourse, repeats to his disciples That they must expect to meet with every species of contempt and ill-usage, for his sake, from those who had wilfully shut their eyes to his most gracious offers, thereby rejecting both him and his Father. Great, however, as the sufferings of the righteous may be, how infinitely short do they fall of the sufferings of the wicked! The former have their comforts and supports, which they would not part with to be relieved from any worldly calamity; whilst the latter have no place of refuge or rest.

From the above verses, it is evident that the guilt of the Jews consisted in their resistance

“26. But when the Comforter
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refusal of such proofs as must have
 been convincing to their own minds:
 their querable ignorance would not have
 been deemed culpable, by the God of
 truth; but they were not only possessed
 of prophecies respecting the Messiah;
 they hourly saw fulfilled before
 their eyes, but also were witnesses of such
 performances by him, in confirmation
 of his doctrines, as no man before ever
 could perform, which they must have known
 that only God alone could perform. We
 suppose that these thoughts must, and
 have been very troublesome to them,
 whatever conviction they might have
 received, our Lord's precepts and
 commands were so opposite to their worldly
 and temporal interests, that they were
 determined, by every means in their
 power, to crush a system so ill-suited
 to their pride and self-importance. We
 suppose presumptuous mortals, to strive
 against the Maker, and to suppose that they
 could overturn his wise and un-
 dermining councils! ‘Without a cause,’

did they hate him ; who, independent of the infinite spiritual benefits he conferred upon them by the sacrifice of himself to make atonement for their guilt, spent his whole life in doing good to them !

The gift of the holy Spirit, which our Lord here again promises to send to the aid and support of his disciples, under all their trials and sufferings, when he should return to the Father, was to be an additional witness, both to them and to the world, of the truth of his divine mission : —to them, as the accomplishment of the promise he had made to them ; to the world, by conferring on them such new talents, in the gift of languages and other spiritual graces, as were necessary for the great business they had in hand, and which must forcibly strike all those who had formerly known them without such advantages.

Accept, most gracious and merciful God, of our humble and hearty thanks, that thou hast vouchsafed us the light of thy beloved Son's most glorious gospel,
and

did they hate him; who, ~~was~~
 infinite spiritual benefits ~~to~~
 them by the sacrifice of his
 atonement for their guilt, ~~by~~
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 God, of our humble and ~~humble~~
 hat thou hast vouchsafed us ~~thy~~
 thy beloved Son's most glorious

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

and the assistance of thy holy Spirit
 grant that we may ever be gr
 such inestimable favors, and make
 a use of them, as that we may
 partakers of thine everlasting
 through the merits and mediation
 Jesus Christ! Amen.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XVI.

“ 1. **T**HESE things have I spoken unto
“ you, that ye should not be of-
“ fended.

“ 2. They shall put you out of the
“ synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that
“ whosoever killeth you, will think that he
“ doeth God service.

“ 3. And these things will they do
“ unto you, because they have not known
“ the Father, nor me.

“ 4. But these things have I told you,
“ that, when the time shall come, ye may
“ remember that I told you of them. And
“ these things I said not unto you at the
“ beginning, because I was with you.”

Our

CHAPTER THE TWENTY

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XV.

1. **THESE** things have I said
to you, that ye should not be
scandalized.

2. They shall put you out of the
synagogues: yea, the time cometh,
whensoever killeth you, will think
that ye do it in the name of God service.

3. And these things will I say
unto you, because they have not seen
the Father, nor me.

But these things have I said
unto you, when the time shall come,
that ye may remember that I told you of these
things I said not unto you in
private, because I was with you.

Our Lord foretels all the troubles and sufferings which should befall his disciples when he should leave them, though they had faith in him, instead of being warned that they should, on the contrary, acquire strength, by the remembrance of the trials which he had before prepared them to expect in a misguided world, the same trials which he himself had met with, and which he foretold would befall them in the same causes. Calamities, or troubles, do not appear as such, (for they are so called in disguise,) lose much of their force when we are forewarned of them.

Whilst our Saviour remained with his disciples, the information was unnecessary, indeed, might their faith in him from the beginning, have been proof against a dismal prospect; but now that he was about to leave them, he omitted nothing of fortifying their minds; that, when the hour of trial should come, they might not shrink from their duty, though the trial should subject them to the cruellest persecutions, nay even to death itself; which he tells them the

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Jews would inflict on them, under the idea of rendering God service. It does not fall to the lot of Christians in general to suffer much in the cause of their religion; but whenever such case does occur, ought we to murmur? ought we not rather to reflect on the sufferings of our blessed Lord, and his apostles in the propagation of the gospel, and be thankful to God that he has thought us worthy to suffer for his cause. "The Atheist, who affects to deny the existence of a God, is not more absurd, than he who acknowledges, yet refuses to fulfil his orders: murmuring against his ordinances, is blasphemy against his justice, and defying the wrath of Omnipotence." The afflictions we frequently labor under are, generally, sent either to wean us from a world which even the best of us are apt to become too fond of, or as a trial of our sincerity. To submit with resignation to the dispensations of Providence, whilst we are in a state of prosperity, requires no great exertion; the trial is, when adversity

ty falls heavy on us : then is the true and faithful servant of God distinguished from the time-server. " There is (says a modern author) nothing so pleasing and satisfactory to the human mind, as self-approbation, and conscious rectitude : the soul, supported by these sweeteners of existence, is rarely depressed by common misfortunes ; or, if for a short time it is over-clouded by disappointment, the shades of sorrow quickly disperse, and hope, like the bright sun bursting through a cloud of darkness, shines with double lustre."

When any great calamity overtakes us, whether national or individual, prudence directs us to seek the best and safest way of extricating ourselves. Thus, for example : in time of war, every precaution is used to prevent an invasion from our enemies, and the most vigorous methods are taken to defeat their designs. We are told by St. James (chap. iv. ver. 1.), that sin is the original cause of wars and tumults, those scourges of the human race :
 From whence come wars and fightings
 " among

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“among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?” If so, let us consider what is the most likely method to avert such calamities; or, when they have actually befallen us, to bring them to a speedy termination. Ought not every individual, on such an occasion, let the war have been ever so just, (even though entered into in defence of liberty and life) to reflect how that life has been spent, and what use he has hitherto made of the blessing of liberty. If the result of such inquiry is favorable, then may he with an upright heart join his prayers to the general voice, that God in his mercy would restore peace and tranquillity to his poor, bleeding country: and we are assured that such prayers shall not be ineffectual: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”—(St. James.)

If, therefore, these means may be supposed to contribute in any degree to the restoration of peace and tranquillity, are not those who help to bring about a general

ral depravity, thereby provoking the Almighty to afflict us with such scourges, as great enemies to their own lives, their liberties, their king, their country, and their religion, as those very foes who are in arms against them? Although I have already been led further into this subject than I at first intended, I shall beg to be indulged with a few more observations before I quit it entirely.

When, by the chance of war, our enemies fall into our hands, may every Christian take pattern by the benevolent spirit of Elisha, and, as far as is consistent with his own and his country's safety, give them every indulgence that persons in their situation can reasonably expect; for though Elisha's example cannot be always followed, in giving the prisoners immediate freedom, (as, we are informed, in the sixth chapter of the second book of Kings, he did,) yet it is in the victor's power to make their misfortune more or less severe, by his treatment of them: and shall the Jew excel the Christian in mercy? Shall the

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the Jewish institution, which was only preparatory to the Christian, produce more benevolence, even in one single instance, than that religion which was intended to exalt, refine, and ennoble mankind? Cruelty and Christianity can never be reconciled. How can he expect favor from a God of mercy, who refuses it to his fellow-creature? and, if we make God our enemy, what will all our worldly pomp avail us! When therefore he, in mercy, sends us any severe scourge to bring us to repentance, let us strictly examine our conduct, and repent us of the crimes which have drawn down his displeasure upon us, not doubting but it will then be withdrawn; but where would be the mercy in removing the calamity, till the cure was either performed or in a fair train of being accomplished? "When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness." The great city of Nineveh was preserved from impending destruction, by the penitence of its inhabitants; who, on the preaching
of

of the prophet, Jonah, humbled themselves before God, and sought his pardon by fasting and prayer. Such conduct is the most likely means of averting, or shortening, a national calamity. Let us not, however, imagine from thence, that we are ever afterwards to be exempt from the various troubles of this life : St. Peter informs us, in his first Epistle, (chap. iv. ver. 17. 18.) “ Judgment must begin at the house of God : and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? ”

If the apostles and many of their successors were to meet with the severest sufferings which could be inflicted on them by a wicked and ungrateful world, what must the wicked themselves expect ? since sufferings (permitted only to befall the righteous) are the natural consequence and inseparable attendants on vice, and are much more severe from the reflection that we have brought them upon ourselves.

selves. But when we look still further, and reflect that the greatest sufferings of this world fall infinitely short of those reserved for the obdurate sinner in the next, what madness and folly is it in any one to continue in so deplorable a condition, when our kind and merciful Saviour has, in the parable of the prodigal son, offered a welcome reception to the very worst of sinners, if they will return from their evil courses and sue for grace and pardon? But some people, from indolence, or the fear of sufferings which they have never yet experienced, are prevented from making the attempt. Far be it from me to flatter such with the hope of recovering God's pardon or favor, without sincere repentance and a thorough change of heart and life; and this cannot be brought about, unless the mind of the sinner is brought to feel the deepest sorrow and regret for his past wickedness. But will a perseverance in evil enable him to escape the stings of conscience, "the worm that never dieth, and whose fire is not quenched?"

d?" Most assuredly not. How much better is it, then, for those who have brought themselves into such a situation that, in either case, great sufferings must be their lot, to choose the lesser evil, and by a noble exertion endeavor to conquer their sins, and by sincere repentance and amendment of life to become new creatures; in which they may be assured of God's effectual assistance, if they humbly and fervently apply for it. Even their sufferings in this life would, in such case, be greatly diminished; for whereas the obdurate sinner, who could not hide from himself that he was heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, would be daily adding to his own sufferings, those of the penitent would hourly decrease, till in time he would recover his peace of mind and be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving to his merciful Saviour, who had not only enabled him to escape eternal punishment, but, by his intercession with the Father, had procured him the means of eternal bliss. Since we all know that

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one or other of these situations will be our lot in the next world, can we hesitate one moment in the choice we shall make?

The consciousness that we enjoy the favor and approbation of God, will make the desert smile; nor is it in the power of any reverse of fortune to make those miserable who have such a support. Thomson, in his hymn, beautifully describes the situation of a person who places his entire dependance upon God:—

“ Should fate command me to the farthest verge
 “ Of the green earth, to distant barb’rous climes,
 “ Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
 “ Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
 “ Flames on th’ Atlantic isles; ’tis nought to me
 “ Since God is ever present, ever felt,
 “ In the void waste as in the city full:
 “ And where He vital spreads there must be joy.
 “ When e’en at last the solemn hour shall come,
 “ And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
 “ I chearful will obey; there, with new pow’rs,
 “ Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
 “ Where Universal Love not smiles around,
 “ Sustaining all yon orbs and all their sons;
 “ From *seeming Evil* still educating *Good*,
 “ And *Better* thence again, and *Better* still,
 “ In infinite progression.—But I lose
 “ Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
 “ Come then, expressive silence, muse his praise.”

“ 5. But

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ation of a person who places
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“ Should fate command me to retire
“ Of the green earth, to distant haunts
“ Rivers unknown to song; where fountains
“ Gilds Indian mountains, or his long
“ Flames on th’ Atlantic isles; his song
“ Since God is ever present, ever rich
“ In the void waste as in the city full:
“ And where He vital spreads there meet
“ When e’en at last the solemn hour shall
“ And wing my mystic flight to future years
“ I cheerful will obey; there, with new
“ Will rising wonders sing: I cannot
“ Where Universal Love not smiles sweet,
“ Sustaining all yon orbs and all their hosts;
“ From *seeming* Evil still educating Good,
“ And *Better* thence again, and *Better* still,
“ In infinite progression.—But I hide
“ Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
Come then, expressive silence, made in

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

“ 5. But now I go my way to
“ sent me, and none of you ask
“ Whither goest thou?

“ 6. But, because I have said
“ things unto you, sorrow hath filled
“ heart.

“ 7. Nevertheless I tell you this
“ It is expedient for you that I go
“ for if I go not away, the Comforter
“ not come unto you; but if I go
“ will send him unto you.

“ 8. And when he is come, he
“ prove the world of sin, and of righte-
“ ness, and of judgement:

“ 9. Of sin, because they believe
“ on me;

“ 10. Of righteousness, because
“ my Father, and ye see me not;

“ 11. Of judgement, because the
“ of this world is judged.”

Our Lord having again ex-
clared to his disciples that he was
to leave the world and return to
the Father, gently reproaches them for

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of selfishness, which they had shewn not only upon this but upon many other occasions; for though the idea of losing their beloved master, certainly, gave them great uneasiness, yet the disappointment of all their worldly expectations which, notwithstanding his frequent admonitions to the contrary, they had still placed in him, seems to have occupied too much of their thoughts. Our merciful Saviour, who made every allowance for the weakness and imperfection of our nature, condescends to their feelings, and comforts them with the assurance that it was necessary, on their accounts, for him to return to Heaven, as the holy Spirit was not to be sent, in that visible manner in which they were to receive it, till by his death he had made atonement for sin; but that, after his ascension into Heaven, one of the first and most eminent fruits of his passion and death would be the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. Our blessed Lord's attention to the happiness of mankind, whose redemption he had purchased with his

of selfishness, which they had only upon this but upon occasions; for though the dear beloved master, certainly, gave uneasiness, yet the disappointment of their worldly expectations withstanding his frequent and the contrary, they had still peace seems to have occupied too many thoughts. Our merciful Saviour made every allowance for the weakness and imperfection of our nature, he condescends to their feelings, and comforts them with the assurance that it was not on their accounts, for him to go to Heaven, as the holy Spirit was present, in that visible manner in which we were to receive it, till by his death he made atonement for sin; but by his ascension into Heaven, one of the most eminent fruits of his presence, which would be the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them. Our blessed Saviour, in the happiness of our redemption he had purchased

his blood, did not cease on his behalf for the world: he then became, and continues to the end of time, our Advocate and intercessor with the Father.

The devil is here styled the 'Prince of this world,' because of the number of sinners who voluntarily enlisted in his service, and so augmented his pride, and had the presumption to hope for victory even over the Son of God himself. Here, to his cost, he found himself entirely vanquished, that he could not enter this world, but as a thief and murderer who makes use of dark plots to carry his schemes into effect, nor can he ever succeed in his designs against us, if we are not wanting to ourselves, but keep a constant watch over our perverse and sinful inclinations. He has no power over us, nor admittance to our hearts, but only by our own consent and encouragement.

" 12. I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now."

" 13. I

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“ 13. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of
“ truth, is come, he will guide you into
“ all truth : for he shall not speak of him-
“ self ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that
“ shall he speak : and he will shew you
“ things to come.

“ 14. He shall glorify me : for he shall
“ receive of mine, and shall shew it unto
“ you.”

Our blessed Lord, who knew the inmost recesses of their hearts, and that they were yet far removed from perfection, would not at that time enter more fully into the events that were to befall them, but reserves the rest till the holy Spirit should have enlightened their understanding in all the truths of the Gospel. The knowledge conferred by the Holy Ghost on the apostles, and the other extraordinary gifts which the world would witness were granted not to them only who were to propagate the Gospel but also to all those who accepted it, would furnish fresh means of glory to Christ.

“ 15. All

" 13. Howbeit, when he is
" truth, is come, he will
" all truth: for he shall not
" self; but whatsoever he
" shall he speak: and he
" things to come.

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gifts which the world would not
granted not to them only who
propagate the Gospel but also to
who accepted it, would furnish
ans of glory to Christ.

" 15. All things that the Father
" are mine: therefore said I,
" shall take of mine, and shew
" you.

" 16. A little while, and ye
" see me: and again, a little while
" ye shall see me, because I go
" Father.

" 17. Then said some of his
" among themselves, What is this
" faith unto us, A little while, and
" not see me: and again, a little
" and ye shall see me: and, Behold
" to the Father?

" 18. They said therefore,
" this that he saith, A little while
" cannot tell what he saith.

" 19. Now Jesus knew that they
" desirous to ask him, and said unto
" Do ye enquire among yourselves
" that I said, A little while, and
" not see me: and again, a little
" and ye shall see me.

" 20. Verily, verily, I say unto
" that ye shall weep and lament

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“ world shall rejoyce : and ye shall be
“ sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be
“ turned into joy.

“ 21. A woman when she is in travail
“ hath sorrow, because her hour is come :
“ but as soon as she is delivered of the
“ child, she remembereth no more the
“ anguish, for joy that a man is born into
“ the world.

“ 22. And ye now therefore have sor-
“ row : but I will see you again, and your
“ heart shall rejoyce, and your joy no man
“ taketh from you.

“ 23. And in that day ye shall ask me
“ nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you,
“ Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in
“ my name, he will give it you.

“ 24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing
“ in my name : ask, and ye shall receive,
“ that your joy may be full.

“ 25. These things have I spoken unto
“ you in proverbs : but the time cometh
“ when I shall no more speak unto you in
“ proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly
“ of the Father.

“ 26. At

" world shall rejoice: and
 " sorrowful, but your sorrow
 " turned into joy.

" 21. A woman when she
 " hath sorrow, because her husband
 " but as soon as she is delivered
 " child, she remembereth her
 " anguish, for joy that a man is
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 " you in proverbs: but the time
 " when I shall no more speak unto
 " proverbs, but I shall shew you
 " of the Father.

" 26. At that day ye shall ask
 " name: and I say not unto you
 " will pray the Father for you:

" 27. For the Father himself
 " you, because ye have loved me,
 " have believed that I came out
 " God.

" 28. I came forth from the
 " and am come into the world:
 " leave the world, and go to the Father.

Our Saviour, lest the disciples
 misunderstand him, here points
 them his meaning, when he said
 holy Spirit, ' He shall take on
 and shew it unto you ;' name
 the Father and the Son being one
 precisely the same as if he had
 shall receive of the Father, but they
 might know that he was in the
 and the Father in him. He then
 to prepare them for that extreme
 they were to endure, from the time
 death to that of his resurrection ;
 during which the world would

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and insult over them for their credulity, and rejoice in their own supposed sagacity. But how short are the triumphs of the wicked! The rejoicing of the world, as he here prophesies, was soon turned into shame and confusion; whilst the troubles of the disciples were changed into the utmost satisfaction and joy, which was not confined to the apostles alone, but extended to all believers. As Christ was now about to leave them, he directs them to pray to the Father, in his name, for whatever they might stand in need of, whether temporal or spiritual, and it should be granted. The duty of prayer is not enjoined us because the Almighty is ignorant of our wants, or inattentive to them, but to keep up in our minds a constant remembrance of our entire dependance upon him. Whilst their Lord and Master was with them, they could want nothing; but with what joy must they have received the assurance that, when they were deprived of that advantage, they might apply, with full confidence

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age, they might apply, with full

dence of success, to the Father; with
them for their faith in, and attach
his Son!

“ 29. His disciples said unto him
“ now speakest thou plainly, and
“ no proverb.

“ 30. Now are we sure that
“ knowest all things, and needest
“ any man should ask thee: by
“ believe that thou camest for
“ God.

“ 31. Jesus answered them, Do
“ believe?

“ 32. Behold, the hour cometh
“ now come, that ye shall be sent
“ every man to his own, and shall
“ me alone: and yet I am not
“ because the Father is with me.

“ 33. These things I have spoken
“ you, that in me ye might have
“ In the world ye shall have tribulation
“ but be of good cheer; I have overcome
“ the world.”

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The disciples could not misunderstand our Lord's present discourse; as he now thought fit to speak in the plainest terms, without figure or metaphor. The faith of the apostles, respecting their master, had undergone frequent changes; but seems now to have been firm and steady; since St. Peter, who generally spoke in the name of the whole, declares their perfect conviction that he came from God. We have a similar passage, in St. Matthew, (chap. xvi. ver. 15. 16. 17. 18.): "He
 "saith unto them, But whom say ye that
 "I am? And Simon-Peter answered and
 "said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the
 "living God. And Jesus answered and
 "said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon
 "Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not
 "revealed it unto thee, but my Father
 "which is in Heaven. And I say also unto
 "thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this
 "rock I will build my church; and the
 "gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I have introduced the above quotation from St. Matthew, not only as it furnishes
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another instance of the faith of the apostles
 respecting their Master, but as it
 likewise, to all those who do not
 Christianity altogether, a new proof
 divinity. Had the reply of St. Peter
 founded in error, our blessed Lord
 upon every occasion gave honor to
 the Father, would have set him right.
 so far is he from correcting him, that
 declares him to be blessed, in that
 had condescended to reveal to him
 which he could never have known
 man. Our Saviour adds, That upon
 rock, (that is, faith, which we all
 is the very essence of Christianity)
 would build his church, against which
 the powers of hell should not prevail
 destroy it. Such, at least, appears
 to be the obvious meaning of a
 which has been wrested to support
 wildest and most absurd doctrines.

Great respect and attention is, therefore,
 surely, due from us to the apostles
 their successors, as God's faithful and
 servants: but let us always

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ber that, highly - favored as they were, they were mere men; nor, from our love and reverence for them, let us attribute to them what belongs to God alone. St. Paul expressly admonishes the Corinthians on this subject, in his first epistle to them, (chap. i. ver. 12. 13.) "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I, of Apollos; and I, of Cephas; and I, of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

St. Paul was too jealous of his Master's honor to permit so glaring an impropriety to pass unreprieved, and thanks God that he had baptized so few amongst them, lest, from the perverseness of the human mind and its proneness to error, that worship and adoration which is due to God alone might have been transferred to himself.

The disciples, most probably, at the time our Lord told them they would soon desert and leave him in distress, thought themselves incapable of such baseness and ingratitude.

ber that, highly-favored as they were mere men; nor in and reverence for them, but to them what belongs to God. Paul expressly admonishes on this subject, in his first epistle (chap. i. ver. 12. 13.) "that every one of you should fear the Lord; and I, of Apollos; and I, of Cephas; and I, of Christ." "divided?" was Paul crucified? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

St. Paul was too jealous of his honor to permit so glaring an error to pass unreproved, and therefore he had baptized so few among the Jews from the perverseness of the law and its proneness to error, and adoration which is due to God might have been transferred to him.

The disciples, most probably at that time our Lord told them they were desert and leave him in distress themselves incapable of such high

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

ingratitude. It might be permitted to check the arrogance of human nature, and to shew how totally insufficient, of ourselves, to persevere in the best and best resolutions. Their love of their Master, being the effect of a natural weakness and fear, was not to them for guilt: they soon repented themselves, and returned to the Lord, and, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, ever afterwards, manifested towards their beloved Master so strong and zealous attachment, that neither the cruelties, nor even death in its most painful form, could make them relinquish their interest in him or the publication of the gospel.

May the Almighty grant us grace cheerfully to submit to whatever is fit and proper for us; that neither prosperity nor adversity may ever tempt us to forsake or neglect our religion for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour! Amen

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XVII.

AS the chapter we are now entering upon consists of one continued prayer, addressed by our blessed Lord to his heavenly Father, for his apostles and for all his true and faithful disciples, I have thought it better to introduce the whole together; lest, by dividing it into parts, the connection should be lost; reserving such remarks as I may think it necessary to make upon it, and on the subject of prayer in general, to be inserted afterwards.

“ 1. These words spake Jesus, and
 “ lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and said,
 “ Father, the hour is come; glorify thy
 “ Son,

CHAPTER THE TWENTY

ST. JOHN, CHAPTER

AS the chapter we are in upon consists of one verse, addressed by our blessed heavenly Father, for his apostle all his true and faithful disciples thought it better to introduce together; lest, by dividing it, the connection should be lost; remarks as I may think it will make upon it, and on the subject general, to be inserted afterwards.

1. These words spake Jesus when he had lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

" Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

" 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

" 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

" 4. I have glorified thee on the earth, O Father, and I will glorify thee now: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

" 5. And now, O Father, glorify me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

" 6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me: the world: thine they were, thou gavest them me; and they have glorified thy word.

" 7. Now they have known thy things, whatsoever thou hast said unto them, are of thee.

" 8. For I have given unto them thy word, which thou gavest me;

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“ have received them, and have known
“ surely that I came out from thee, and
“ they have believed that thou didst send me.

“ 9. I pray for them : I pray not for
“ the world, but for them which thou hast
“ given me : for they are thine.

“ 10. And all mine are thine, and thine
“ are mine ; and I am glorified in them.

“ 11. And now I am no more in the
“ world, but these are in the world, and
“ I come to thee. Holy Father, keep
“ through thine own name those whom
“ thou has given me, that they may be
“ one, as we are.

“ 12. While I was with them in the
“ world, I kept them in thy name : those
“ that thou gavest me I have kept, and none
“ of them is lost, but the son of perdition ;
“ that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

“ 13. And now come I to thee ; and
“ these things I speak in the world, that
“ they might have my joy fulfilled in
“ themselves.

“ 14. I have given them thy word ;
“ and the world hath hated them, be-
“ cause

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" surely that I came out of the

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" world, but these are in the world

" I come to thee. Holy Father,

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" one, as we are.

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" they might have my joy fulfilled

" themselves.

" 14. I have given them thy

" and the world hath hated them

" cause they are not of the world

" I am not of the world.

" 15. I pray not that thou

" take them out of the world,

" thou shouldest keep them from

" 16. They are not of the world

" as I am not of the world.

" 17. Sanctify them through thy

" thy word is truth.

" 18. As thou hast sent me

" world, even so have I also sent

" into the world.

" 19. And for their sakes I

" myself, that they also might be

" through the truth.

" 20. Neither pray I for them

" but for them also which shall be

" me through their word;

" 21. That they all may be

" thou, Father, art in me, and I

" that they also may be one in us;

" world may believe that thou hast

" 22. And the glory which thou

" me I have given them; that they

" be one, even as we are one:

"

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“ 23. I in them, and thou in me, that
“ they may be made perfect in one; and
“ that the world may know that thou
“ hast sent me, and hast loved them, as
“ thou hast loved me.

“ 24. Father, I will that they also,
“ whom thou hast given me, be with me
“ where I am; that they may behold my
“ glory, which thou hast given me: for
“ thou lovedst me before the foundation
“ of the world.

“ 25. O righteous Father, the world
“ hath not known thee: but I have known
“ thee, and these have known that thou
“ hast sent me.

“ 26. And I have declared unto them
“ thy name, and will declare it; that the
“ love wherewith thou hast loved me may
“ be in them, and I in them.”

Although I have, in a former part of
this work, treated pretty much at large on
the necessity and utility of prayer, I can-
not suffer this occasion to pass without
endeavoring to impress this duty still more
strongly

" 23. I in them, and thou
 " they may be made perfect
 " that the world may know
 " thou hast sent me, and thou
 " thou hast loved me.

" 24. Father, I will thank
 " whom thou hast given me
 " where I am; that they may
 " glory, which thou hast given
 " thou lovedst me before the
 " of the world.

" 25. O righteous Father,
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Although I have, in a former
 this work, treated pretty much of
 the necessity and utility of prayer,
 not suffer this occasion to pass
 endeavoring to impress this duty

strongly on the minds of my readers
 the example as well as precept
 blessed Saviour.

We have many instances, besides
 one before us, of our Lord's address-
 ing himself to his Father, in prayer :
 it could be necessary for him, who,
 the godhead with his human nature
 Lord of all, and could have com-
 manded legions of angels to execute his
 will, that whilst he continued in that nature
 he would practise all the duties required
 that in him we might have a perfect
 example to look up to, under every circum-
 stance of life. We are told, that our
 Lord lifted up his eyes to Heaven
 when he addressed his Father : and so
 we may do, and with confidence, if our
 hearts are according to the precepts of the
 Gospel ; but, through our own
 weakness, the conduct of the publicans
 did not so much as dare lift up
 their eyes to Heaven, but smote upon their
 breasts, saying, God be merciful to me, a
 sinner. It will be, generally speaking, more be-

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in us. Our hearts, however, must be always lifted up to Heaven when we address the Father of mercies : it is the heart, and the heart only, which God will accept : mere words of form are worse than total neglect, and become an additional insult to him.

The hour of our blessed Lord was now arrived when he should glorify his Father, in the mercy he would shew to mankind, by his sufferings and death, as an atonement to the divine justice : this glory the Father would make to shine forth with the utmost brightness upon his beloved Son ; eternal life being promised, only through his merits and mediation : let us not, then, deceive ourselves with any vain or presumptuous thoughts of being able to procure eternal life by any other means ; but, with the utmost humility, thankfulness and gratitude, seek it where we are sure we shall not be disappointed ; for if our hope and trust in God's mercy is steadily fixed on, and through, the intercession of our blessed Redeemer and Advocate, we shall,
through

in us. Our hearts, however, always lifted up to Heaven address the Father of mercies, and the heart only, we accept: mere words of lip, rather than total neglect, and less conditional insult to him.

The hour of our blessed life arrived when he should glorify in the mercy he would bestow by his sufferings and death: this merit to the divine justice: this Father would make to shine in the utmost brightness upon his eternal life being promised, on his merits and mediation: let us not deceive ourselves with any presumptuous thoughts of being assured eternal life by any other means, with the utmost humility, thanksgiving, and attitude, seek it where we will not be disappointed; for full trust in God's mercy is fixed, and through, the intercession of our Redeemer and Advocate.

through him, ensure our own and glorify God's infinite mercy and goodness to his sinful creatures. Do expressions in the second and third clearly prove that all mankind come partakers of eternal life, if we form the terms on which it is offered. These terms are, the knowledge of the only true God, and of his Son Christ; in which is necessarily obedience to his laws. How ought we to be, that this blessed knowledge is so plainly revealed; ignorant, as well as the learned perfectly acquainted therewith!

It cannot be necessary to point out to my readers the many proofs contained in the chapter before us, of the divinity of our Saviour; as almost every verse is a testimony of it.

The only Son of God, who dwelt with the Father before the world was created, quitted his seat of bliss, and came down upon earth, not only by his sufferings and death to save mankind from the

ment they had incurred by their transgressions, but also to enlighten their dark minds, that they might serve, honor, and obey God, after an acceptable manner. In so doing, Christ glorified his Father upon earth : and God glorified his Son, for his ready obedience to his will, by commanding every knee to bow at the name of Jesus Christ, and by requiring of every one who hoped for salvation, to pray for it, only, in and through the merits of his beloved Son ; investing him with all honor, power, dignity and dominion. Yet does our blessed Saviour condescend to bestow on us the appellation of brethren. What an exaltation to human nature, to be considered as related to Christ !

If we are desirous of knowledge, riches, honors or pleasures, we are offered them all in his gospel. Shall we, then, follow with the utmost eagerness, the trifles and vanities of this world, making them of consequence, and even essential to, our present happiness, and spending upon them the greatest part of our precious time ;

ment they had incurred by transgressions, but also to enlighten their minds, that they might learn to obey God, after an acceptable manner: so doing, Christ glorified his Father on earth: and God glorified his Son by his ready obedience to his will, by causing every knee to bow at the name of Christ, and by requiring of every man that hoped for salvation, to praise him in and through the merits of his Son; investing him with all heavenly dignity and dominion. Yes, our blessed Saviour condescended to use the appellation of brethren, his exaltation to human nature, considered as related to Christ!

If we are desirous of knowledge, honors or pleasures, we are mistaken in his gospel. Shall we then, with the utmost eagerness, pursue the vanities of this world, making ineffectual haste, and even essential to our present happiness, and spending the greatest part of our

time; which, with talents suitable ends, was given us for the noblest purposes? St. Luke informs us, in the twentieth chapter of his gospel and verse, that even the angels are interested in man's welfare: "Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God for every sinner that repenteth." With compassion and pity must they look on those who waste the greatest part of their time in folly and dissipation; their pursuits must appear to them more vain and insignificant, than the toys and amusements of children to those of ripeness. It can only be for want of due reflection that so many people make so bad use of their talents in the employment of their time. Indolence and carelessness are the great enemies to the right performance of our duties; but let us ever keep in mind that God expects an improvement of the talents he has committed to our charge.

From the seventh and eighth verses we learn, that the doctrines delivered

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proceeded from the Father, and that the disciples had properly understood and applied them. Let us endeavor to follow their example; and, by our pious and zealous adherence to the word of God, manifest the stability of our faith; nor attend to those who would throw a stumbling block in our way, and who, not content with making innovations themselves in the sacred Scriptures, are constantly on the watch to draw others into a participation of their pernicious doctrines.

Our blessed Lord, knowing what severe trials and persecutions the apostles would have to encounter, prays to his Father for them, particularly; not that they might escape, but be supported under them; they being intended to show forth the honor and glory of God, and to be the means of promoting their own eternal happiness; who were chosen as the instruments of universal good to mankind, by the propagation of the gospel: since there could not be a stronger proof of the truth of the religion

religion they preached, than their patient submission to every species of trial and persecution, and even to the most cruel death, in defence of it.

From Christ's example, we may learn that we are permitted to address prayers for our friends under trouble, danger, or distress ; but, as to what relates to their temporal concerns, we must keep our desires within due bounds, nor suffer anxiety for them, any more than for ourselves, to divert us from the performance of our duty to God, or to draw from us murmurs against his divine dispensations. Worldly concerns must never be suffered to interfere with heavenly ones.

Our Lord prays that his disciples might be kept from the evil of sin, which in their various temptations they were in danger of falling into, either from the persecution of their enemies or from spiritual pride, which is one of the most dangerous temptations thrown out by the grand adversary of mankind where great spiritual gifts are granted ; this was a temptation which it
was

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was particularly incumbent on the apostles to guard against ; as on them their Master bestowed the power of working miracles, for the propagation of his faith, making them partakers of his divine nature, that they might follow his steps in all things.

Our Saviour compares the love and union between his Father and himself, with that which ought to subsist amongst his disciples. How, then, can we call ourselves Christians, or presume to suppose that we have any part in Christ, if we entertain malice, or are uncharitable one to another ? In St. Luke's gospel, (chap. vi. ver. 36.) our Lord says : " Be ye merciful, as your Father which is in Heaven is merciful ;" and, again, in St. Matthew, (chap. v. ver. 48.) " Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." We cannot understand these texts literally : we know that Heaven and earth are not wider asunder, than the perfections of our Maker and the humble efforts of the best of the human race ; but we may learn from them, that
it

was particularly incumbent on him to guard against; as on him he bestowed the power of uniting them partakers of his divine life, that they might follow his steps.

Our Saviour compares the union between his Father and himself with that which ought to fix his disciples. How, then, as ourselves Christians, or professing that we have any part in him, we entertain malice, or are envious one to another? In St. Luke (chap. vi. ver. 36.) our Lord says, "ye merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful;" and in Matthew, (chap. v. ver. 48.) "Be ye as perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect." We must not understand these texts literally: we know that heaven and earth are not wider than the perfections of our Maker; but we may learn from them

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it is our duty, and ought to be our happiness, to endeavor to attain to the pitch of excellence of which our Father is capable; and that universal benevolence will make us bear some faint resemblance of our merciful God, who is graciously to all the works of his hands.

Our Lord desires that his disciples might see his glory. As they witnessed the insults and sufferings he submitted to, in his state of humiliation, let them have the satisfaction of seeing him pray (who never prayed in vain) that they might be with him and see his glory; not merely have a transient view of it, but to see, enjoy, and partake of it for ever and ever, in the mansions of glory. What an unbounded reward is he sent to all who faithfully love and serve God, and his Son, Jesus Christ, who hath sent! for this reward is not confined to the apostles, but extends to all disciples to the end of the world.

Could we but be persuaded to direct our affections upon things above, th

duty of prayer would not be so much neglected, or performed with so much carelessness and inattention, as is too often the case. Ignorance is another great bar to the fervency of our addresses to our Maker, both public and private. I trust, therefore, it will not be deemed improper in me, before I quit the subject of prayer, to make some few comments upon that most excellent form taught us by our blessed Lord : this appears to me the more necessary, as, in the intercourse I have had with the lower order of young people, (and, I am much afraid, it is not confined to them,) I have generally found them repeat this divine composition, plain and easy as it is, without affixing any precise meaning to it, or seeming to understand what they applied for, or the duties required of them. As this most excellent form of prayer always constitutes a part of our devotions, I flatter myself, if I can persuade my readers to attend seriously to it, it may be the means of drawing their attention, in like manner, to every other
form

duty of prayer would not be neglected, or performed with carelessness and inattention in the case. Ignorance is another to the fervency of our Maker, both public and private; therefore, it will not be done in me, before I quit the duty to make some few comments on the excellent form taught us by the Lord: this appears to me necessary, as, in the intercourse with the lower order of angels (and, I am much afraid, it is so to them,) I have generally repeated this divine composition as easy as it is, without affixing any meaning to it, or seeming to consider what they applied for, or the use required of them. As this mode of prayer always constitutes one of our devotions, I flatter myself to persuade my readers to attend to it, it may be the means of directing them, in like manner, to every

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form of prayer, or praise, which I address to the Deity. With this I shall proceed, without further apology.

“ Our Father, who art in Heaven

When we consider the honor conferred upon us, in being commanded to call God by that most affectionate and revered name of ‘ Father,’ are we not astonished at his condescending goodness? Should not this goodness excite our thoughts to the throne of grace with humble gratitude, and unbounded love and veneration, for the inestimable privilege of being permitted to apply to him who is the Lord of the universe, by his most precious and endearing a title?

“ Hallowed, be thy name.”

May thy name be honored (or glorified) throughout all the world; may the whole race of mankind unite in thy praise, and may we never presume to

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holy name lightly, or without the utmost reverence and respect, but glorify thee, O Lord God, in every thing wherein thou hast been pleased to make thyself known to us.

Who can repeat this petition, yet think themselves at liberty to take the name of the Lord their God in vain, as too many do in their common conversation?

“Thy kingdom come.”

Let the Lord rule over all the nations of the earth; and let the Gospel be published, spread, and prosper, throughout all the world; that all mankind may become one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ; may each of us receive fresh supplies of thy holy Spirit; and may the kingdom of grace come and dwell in our hearts here upon earth, that we may be constantly prepared for thy kingdom of glory hereafter.

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

May we constantly follow the bright example of the blessed above; and, though
we

we cannot in this world attain to their height of perfection, grant us grace that we may, to the utmost of our power, strive to copy their excellencies, in our ready and cheerful obedience to thy will, that, through the merits of Christ, which have raised those saints to the height of that exaltation and happiness they now enjoy, we, thy sinful creatures, always remembering that thou hast opened the gates of eternal life to us also, may enter therein, and with them become partakers of thine everlasting kingdom,

“Give us this day our daily bread.”
Give us, O God, every thing that thou seeest to be needful for us, both temporal and spiritual. On thee alone we depend; and, without thy constant support, we must fall again to the dust from which thou formedst us.

In this most excellent prayer, which no Christian should omit to address to the throne of grace every morning and evening, we are reminded of our constant de-

pendance upon the Almighty, for support in our different stations of life. Those who are possessed of the largest fortunes, are not therefore the less dependant upon God; since his blessing upon their abundance is equally necessary to make it contribute to nourish and preserve life, as to secure its continuance to them. We should likewise remember, that riches are only lent to us; and that, should God think fit to recal them, we have no pretence to murmur; as he has an undoubted right to dispose of his own. God, to shew us the little value of such possessions in his sight and the entire dependance of all his creatures upon him, even for their daily bread, frequently makes the rich and the poor to change situations. This consideration should teach us to be content with whatever station of life God may think fit to place us in, and make us endeavor to obtain his favor by the performance of the particular duties which that station may require: if he has placed us in abundance, by becoming faithful stewards of
our

pendance upon the Almighty in our different stations: who are possessed of the law are not therefore the less dependent upon God; since his blessing upon the law is equally necessary as tribute to nourish and preserve its continuance to them. Likewise remember, that lent to us; and that, should fit to recal them, we have no murmur; as he has an undoubted dispose of his own. God, to the little value of such possessions, and the entire dependance of all creatures upon him, even for their food frequently makes the rich and to change situations. This should teach us to be content with every station of life God may think fit to place us in, and make us endeavor in his favor by the performance of particular duties which that station require: if he has placed us in poverty, by becoming faithful stewards

our superfluous wealth; if in poverty industry, frugality, and a cheerful submission to his dispensations.

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

May we ever remember the terror which alone thou hast promised givenness of our offences, by shewing mercy to others, as thou hast shewed to us; may we be kind and charitable to our fellow-creatures, thinking no evil of them; slow to anger, and ready to do them when they have given cause of offence, as we hope for forgiveness of our innumerable offences against our God.

Shall we presume to repeat this prayer, if we are not in love and fellowship with all our fellow-creatures? Shall we dare to refuse them forgiveness of a hundred pence, when we are at the same time indebted to our Lord ten talents; he having expressly de-

is here made use of for the
offences, yet it seems particularly
to the cases of such persons and
unavoidable misfortunes and
fault of their own, have no
debtors; without the ability to
exercise all the severity which
gives us (for the purpose of
frauds) over such unhappy
surely inconsistent with that
severity here implied; particularly
considered that such severity,
benefiting ourselves, deprives the
object of it of the means of
support, and frequently proves
destruction to a whole family.

That if we forgive not our
 passers, neither will our heavenly
 Father forgive our trespasses.

I cannot close this subject
 marking, that although the
 is here made use of for
 offences, yet it seems pertinent
 to the cases of such persons as
 unavoidable misfortunes and
 fault of their own, have
 debtors, without the ability
 exercise all the severity which
 gives us (for the purpose of
 frauds) over such unhappy
 surely inconsistent with that
 severity here implied; particularly
 considered that such severity, by
 neglecting ourselves, deprives the
 object of it of the means of
 support, and frequently proves the
 destruction to a whole family.

"And lead us not into temptation;
 deliver us from evil."
 Suffer us not, O God, to be led into

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

tations, and assist us with thy grace
 ever we fall into them, that we
 enabled to escape pure and unpolled
 becomes thy true and faithful servant
 save us from the snares of our
 my, and from the temptations of
 corrupt hearts; and above all things
 us not presumptuously to run into
 in the vain hope that we have
 sufficient to escape; but let us re-
 member that our utmost strength
 weakness, without the assistance
 grace.

In all the various temptations
 which we are constantly surrounded
 this world, we shall be perfectly
 whilst we place our entire dependence
 upon God: he will cause them
 out for our good: for, though he
 us to be tempted, the fault lies
 selves, if we are drawn to do evil;
 never tempts us to do evil; but when
 the temptation, make a way for
 escape. But if we knowingly run on

into temptations, it would argue the utmost presumption, as well as folly, to expect that the Almighty should interfere to prevent the natural consequences of our own wilfulness and perverseness.

One of the greatest temptations young people can subject themselves to, arises from reading improper books, and keeping bad company : “ Evil communication “ (says St. Paul) corrupts good manners.” It is as dangerous to their peace and happiness, both here and hereafter, as rocks and quicksands to the lives and safety of mariners.

“ For thine is the kingdom, and the
“ power, and the glory, for ever and
“ ever. Amen.

Thou, O God, art the Creator and supreme Ruler over the whole universe : thy power is infinite, and thy glory shall endure for ever. To thee, therefore, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all honor, might, majesty, and dominion ; and may thy holy name be celebrated by all the
creatures

into temptations, it was a most presumption, to expect that the Almighty would prevent the natural consequences of our own wilfulness and per-
 One of the greatest temptations people can subject themselves to, is from reading improper books, and bad company: "Evil company," (says St. Paul) corrupts good manners. It is as dangerous to their piety, as quicksands to the lives of mariners.

"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Thou, O God, art the Creator and Ruler over the whole universe; thy power is infinite, and thy glory endures for ever. To thee, therefore, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion: thy holy name be celebrated for ever.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

creatures thou hast formed and sustained, world without end. So be it.

All our prayers which are offered with humility, piety, and true faith to the throne of grace, may be accepted as tending to the honor and glory of God, as we then fulfil his commands, manifest our entire dependance upon him, and confidence in, the mercy, wisdom, and power of our Maker, though King of kings and Lord of lords, the creator and preserver of all things, condescends to the humble supplications of his creatures, thereby affording a convincing proof that he does not look the least of all his works, constantly guards and protects the world by his good providence. This must excite in us the utmost love, affection, and gratitude, and make us address our praises and praises to our glorious and delightful is this employment to our mind, that, we learn from it it forms a considerable part of the

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of those blessed spirits who are inhabitants of those regions of immortality at which we all hope to arrive.

That these hopes may be realized to us all, may God, of his infinite mercy, grant, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord! Amen; So be it.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XVIII.

WE are now come to the account of those unparalleled cruelties and sufferings, ending in a most painful and ignominious death, to which the Lord of life submitted for lost mankind. Here let us pause awhile, and collect our scattered thoughts, that we may enter upon the consideration of the awful subject with that deliberation and reverence which it has a right to claim.

Let us consider, in the first place, what was the cause of this direful tragedy ; and, whilst we indulge the feelings of indignation and horror at the authors of it,

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let us examine how far we are ourselves partakers of their guilt.

Was it not sin, that dire and baneful enemy of the whole human race, which, by depriving man of the favor of his Maker and banishing him from his presence, rendered an atonement necessary, before he could be again admitted as an object of that happiness which his beneficent Creator intended for him? Sin, then, being the primary cause, he only who is free from sin can claim an exemption from being an accomplice in those acts which we cannot even think of without indignation: and, partial as we are to our own failings, (I conceive) no man will be so presumptuous as to declare himself free from the common lot of humanity. Let him put the question to his unbiaſſed conscience, and it will reply to him, as the prophet Nathan did to David, Thou art the man: nay, still more guilty is the Christian, who, with the example of the Jews before his eyes, commits wilful and presumptuous sins; since he may be considered

let us examine how far we
partakers of their guilt.

Was it not sin, that first
enemy of the whole human race,
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Maker and banishing him from
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then, being the primary cause,
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exemption from being an accomplice
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without indignation: and, partial
to our own failings, (I conceive)
will be so presumptuous as to
claim himself free from the common
infirmary. Let him put the question
to his unbiassed conscience, and it will
answer him, as the prophet Nathan did
David, *Thou art the man*: nay, still more
the Christian, who, with the eyes
of the Jews before his eyes, commits
the same presumptuous sins; since he may

be considered as crucifying his Lord afresh;
therefore, the dismal scene on which
we are now about to enter, produce
its full effect upon our hearts, by turning
our anger from the cruel Jews, who were
the immediate actors in it, against
ourselves for our own transgressions: let it
excite in us such an abhorrence of the
crime which cost our blessed Lord so dear,
that through the grace of God on our
endeavors, we may forsake them,
in their stead, seek after and cherish
Christian grace and virtue which call
for our profession; then every tear
for the sufferings of our Redeemer
will be a pearl, of great price. But let us
not deceive ourselves: the grief we make
of the relation of them, except with
reference to ourselves, and which we
do not equally feel at any other scene of
tragedy is nothing worth; it does not
spring from religion, but from the nat-
ural impulse of every mind not rendered
callous by vice. Our Lord himself
showed the way to his crucifixion, (as re-

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St. Luke, chap. xxiii. ver. 28.) tells the women of Jerusalem : “ Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children :” and although by this our Saviour foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and the sufferings the inhabitants would draw upon themselves, as a punishment for their wickedness to him, it also teaches us that, when we mourn our Lord’s sufferings, we should not forget ourselves, and the share we had in them. This seriously and rightly attended to, cannot fail to work in us a thorough reformation and amendment of life : and if our sorrow produces this blessed effect, we may be assured it is such a sorrow as will be acceptable in the sight of God, and the best and truest return of homage and gratitude we can offer him, for his infinite goodness in that first and greatest of blessings.—the redemption of mankind, by the sufferings and death of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

St. Luke, chap. xxiii. ver. 34.

women of Jerusalem: "Weep

"me, but weep for yourselves

"your children:" and also

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Jesus Christ, our Lord.

As there are many particulars affecting story mentioned by the evangelists which are omitted by St. I shall (as upon former occasion) duce them into such parts of the they appear to me to belong to.

" 1. When Jesus had spoke words, he went forth with his over the brook Cedron, where garden, into the which he entered his disciples.

" 2. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus times resorted thither with his disciples.

Our blessed Lord taught the multitude daily, in the synagogues and public but it appears to have been his custom when he would instruct his disciples privately, to retire with them, as he did to a garden near to Jerusalem, over the brook Cedron, (probably at the foot of the Mount of Olives, and which we are told Matthew was called Gethsemane).

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he now repaired with his disciples, to prepare for the approaching awful scene, and to give them his last instructions.

(St. Matthew, chap. xxvi. ver. 37. to 45. inclusive): “ And he took with him
“ Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and
“ began to be sorrowful and very heavy.
“ Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:
“ tarry ye here and watch with me. And
“ he went a little farther, and fell on his
“ face, and prayed, saying, O my Father,
“ if it be possible, let this cup pass from
“ me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as
“ thou wilt. And he cometh unto the
“ disciples, and findeth them asleep, and
“ saith unto Peter, What, could ye not
“ watch with me one hour? Watch and
“ pray, that ye enter not into temptation:
“ the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh
“ is weak. He went again the second
“ time, and prayed, saying, O my Father,
“ if this cup may not pass away from me,
“ except I drink it, thy will be done.
“ And he came and found them asleep
“ again:

“ again, for their eyes were heavy. And
 “ he left them, and went away again, and
 “ prayed the third time, saying the same
 “ words. Then cometh he to his disciples,
 “ and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and
 “ take your rest: behold, the hour is at
 “ hand, and the Son of man is betrayed
 “ into the hands of sinners.”

As sorrow ever wilhes to withdraw
 from common observation, our Lord se-
 lects three of his disciples, (Peter, James,
 and John,) and taking them apart from the
 rest, charges them to watch with him, that
 he might not be interrupted in the perform-
 ance of his religious duties; then, retiring
 to a still more private place, he gives himself
 up entirely to prayer. And to such ex-
 cess did his agony now arise, that human
 weakness, for a moment overcoming the
 fortitude of his soul, forced from him
 a prayer, That if it were possible, con-
 sistently with the task he had undertaken,
 the cup might pass from him; yet, in the
 same instant, qualifying his prayer by im-
 plicit submission to his Father's will.

Let us not pass over this part of the subject without calling to mind that the person suffering all these agonizing torments, which were to be concluded by a painful and ignominious death, was the King of kings, the Son of God himself, the glory of Heaven and earth, and that he submitted to them all to ensure eternal life, not for faithful servants and friends, but for an ungrateful race, who had from the beginning been traitors and rebels to his own and his Father's authority. How wonderfully does this consideration add to the condescension and generosity of such a sacrifice; which exceeds every thing our confined faculties can comprehend, and affords an instance of such love, as none but God himself could shew. Can any one, then, seriously reflecting upon his own wretched condition without his blessed Saviour's aid and assistance, hesitate one moment to accept of salvation on the gracious terms he offers it?

Jesus then returning to his disciples, and finding them asleep, gently rebukes them,

Let us not pass over this subject without calling to mind a person suffering all these tribulations, which were to be his painful and ignominious death. King of kings, the Son of the Father, the glory of Heaven and Earth, he submitted to them all for our life, not for faithful servants, but for an ungrateful race, who from the beginning been traitors to his own and his Father's authority. He wonderfully does this condescension and general sacrifice; which exceeds every confined faculties can comprehend. It affords an instance of such love, but God himself could bear no more. One, then, seriously reflecting on his own wretched condition without the aid and assistance of his Saviour, how could he for one moment to accept of his gracious terms he offers it?

Jesus then returning to his disciples and finding them asleep, gently

rebuked them, for their apparent careless indifference; warning them of the necessity of guarding against temptation (as afterwards actually happened, the desertion of him;) they should be tried and overcome by it: but at the same time, with his usual benignity, himself finds an excuse for their weakness of their nature. He tires; repeats his supplications to the Father: again returns, and warns his disciples. Then, addressing himself to the throne of grace, to be if possible, from agonies which even human fortitude to bear, is (as told by St. Luke) strengthened angel from Heaven; when, knowing the hour of man's redemption was arrived, he calls up all his resolution to support him on that trying occasion. Returning to his disciples, tells them they may now take their rest; that the struggle is over, and he who should be at hand.

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As our blessed Lord was strengthened under his sufferings by an angel, let us not doubt but we also, when overwhelmed by calamity from which no human power can relieve us, shall, if we place our dependence upon God, receive assistance from him, who alone is able to save us.

“ 3. Judas then, having received a
“ band of men and officers from the chief
“ priests and Pharisees, cometh thither
“ with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

“ 4. Jesus, therefore, knowing all things
“ that should come upon him, went forth,
“ and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

“ 5. They answered him, Jesus of Na-
“ zareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am
“ he. And Judas also, which betrayed
“ him, stood with them.

“ 6. As soon then as he had said unto
“ them, I am he, they went backward,
“ and fell to the ground.

“ 7. Then asked he them again, Whom
“ seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Na-
“ zareth.

“ 8. Jesus

As our blessed Lord was
under his sufferings by us
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"5. They answered him, saying,
"zareth. Jesus saith unto
"he. And Judas also, who
"him, stood with them.

"6. As soon then as he had said
"them, I am he, they were
"and fell to the ground.

"7. Then asked he them, saying,
"seek ye? And they said, Jesus
"areth.

"8. Jesus answered, I have
"that I am he. If, therefore, ye
"let these go their way :

"9. That the saying might be
"which he spake, Of them who
"gavest me have I lost none."

We have here an instance of the depravity to which human nature is impelled, by the base passions of envy and resentment : the man who was admitted as an inmate of his master's family, a guest at his table, and treated as a friend rather than a servant, for the advantage of the knowledge he had gained of his places of retirement, betrays him, for a paltry bribe, or in order for his having detected him in his evil practices. If any thing could attest the guilt of so foul a transaction, it would be the strictness with which the hospitality was observed among the Jews, (with whom the partaking of the same meal was regarded as a sacred

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of friendship,) and the hypocritical manner in which, as we are told by St. Mark, it was effected: namely, under the mask of a friendly salutation. The majestic conduct of our blessed Saviour upon this occasion, cannot escape our observation: firm in conscious rectitude, he at once declares himself to be the person they are in search of. Struck with awe at so uncommon a declaration, and at the noble readiness of his conduct, they for a while forget their guilty purpose, and fall prostrate on the ground: but it being our Lord's most gracious design to give himself up to their power, for the accomplishment of man's redemption, (for, unless he had voluntarily submitted, no force could have prevailed against him,) he permits them to rise, and again questions them Whom they seek? and when they repeat that it is 'Jesus of Nazareth,' he again declares himself to be the person; reminding them that their commission extended only to the securing of his person,
and

of friendship,) and the manner in which, as we are told, it was effected: namely, not of a friendly salutation. The conduct of our blessed Saviour on this occasion, cannot escape our firm in conscious rectitude. He declares himself to be the Son of Man in search of. Struck with common a declaration, and the readiness of his conduct, they forget their guilty purpose, and fall on the ground: but the Lord's most gracious design is self up to their power, for the redemption of man's redemption, for he had voluntarily submitted himself to them to rise, and again to them Whom they seek? and he repeat that it is 'Jesus of Nazareth' again declares himself to be the Son of Man reminding them that their commission was only to the securing of his person.

and that therefore they could not have the pretence to molest his disciples.

" 10. Then Simon - Peter, drawing his sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

" 11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: for he that taketh the sword, shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I now pray to my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus must be? In the relation of these transactions, St. Luke tells far more. He touched his ear and healed him.

Peter's zeal for his master's service again manifests itself: his present conduct shews, that his former professions

ness to risk his life for him, were sincere, and from his heart. But this was not the kind of service his master required of him: his kingdom was not of this world. Had he been inclined to resist, would he have made use of the feeble aid of man, when he had the whole heavenly host at his command? The denunciation against all those who take the sword, That they shall perish with the sword, ought, I conceive, to be understood of those who employ it unlawfully, on private occasions, or for the purposes of persecution. With this text so expressly against them, I know not how the professors of Christianity have been able to reconcile those dreadful wars and persecutions for religious opinions, which have deluged the world with blood.

From the example of our blessed Saviour's implicit submission to the will of his Father, we may learn, that it is our duty to receive, with patience and resignation, the cup of affliction, whenever it pleases God, for his wise purposes, to send it to us.

When

ness to risk his life for him, and from his heart. But what kind of service his master required, his kingdom was not of this world. He had been inclined to resist, but he made use of the feeble aid he had the whole heaven command? The denunciation of those who take the sword, they perish with the sword, ought to be understood of those who unlawfully, on private occasions, the purposes of persecution.

text so expressly against it, not how the professors of Christ have been able to reconcile their persecutions for religious which have deluged the world.

From the example of our Saviour's implicit submission to his Father, we may learn, that it is our duty to receive, with patience, tribulation, the cup of affliction, which pleases God, for his wise purposes to us.

When we read that our blessed Saviour healed the wounded man—the man who had come out against him, as a felon, with sword and staff, can we admire his wonderful mercy and lenity? Nor is the stupidity and unheartedness of those who had comprehended him, less remarkable, they could see him perform so great a miracle, and for such a purpose, persevere in their wicked attitude against him, would be incredible, did we find it recorded in the book of truth.

“ 12. Then the band, and the officers of the Jews, took him, and bound him,

“ 13. And led him away to Annas (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that year.)

“ 14. Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

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As it is nowhere mentioned that Annas was in any public employment, it does not appear that the officers could have had any other view in carrying our Lord before him, than that of gratifying the idle curiosity of this relation of the high priest, and adding a new insult to their prisoner. Caiaphas, as high priest, had before prophesied the death of the messiah: it was the very essence of the Jewish law, and the object of all its types and ceremonies, That one man was to die for the people; and, upon the ground of this general belief amongst the Jews, although they disbelieved our Lord to be the messiah, he scrupled not to form his plot for the destruction of an innocent person, whose doctrines were likely to prove destructive to his self-interested views and those of his associates in office. Before a judge so prejudiced and unprincipled, was our Lord dragged, to undergo the ceremony of a mock trial.

We are told by St. Mark, (chap. xiv. ver. 50.) that, upon the apprehension of
our

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our Lord, the disciples "all forsook him,
"and fled."

" 15. And Simon-Peter followed Jesus,
"and so did another disciple. That dis-
"ciple was known unto the high priest,
"and went in with Jesus into the palace
"of the high priest.

" 16. But Peter stood at the door with-
"out. Then went out that other disciple,
"which was known unto the high priest,
"and spake unto her that kept the door,
"and brought in Peter.

" 17. Then saith the damsel that kept
"the door unto Peter, Art not thou also
"one of this man's disciples? He saith, I
"am not.

" 18. And the servants and officers
"stood there, who had made a fire of
"coals, for it was cold, and they warmed
"themselves: and Peter stood with them,
"and warmed himself."

The desertion of the disciples came to
pass, as had been foretold by our blessed

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Lord: but what shall we say of Peter; he who had so confidently boasted, That though all men should be offended because of his master, yet he would never be offended, and that he would die with him rather than deny him? Of his sincerity, at the time, we cannot doubt; nay, he had but just before given a proof of it, in exposing himself to danger in his master's cause. Alas, such is the frailty of human nature, that we can place no reliance upon our best resolves! No sooner is he charged with being the disciple of Jesus, than his heart is overcome with fear, and he confidently makes his first denial of his Lord in his distress.

“ 19. The high priest then asked Jesus
“ of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

“ 20. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the
“ Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither
“ the Jews always resort; and in secret
“ have I said nothing.

“ 21. Why askest thou me? ask them
“ which

“ which heard me, what I have said unto
“ them : behold, they know what I said.

“ 22. And when he had thus spoken,
“ one of the officers which stood by struck
“ Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying,
“ Answerest thou the high priest so ?

“ 23. Jesus answered him, If I have
“ spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ;
“ but if well, why smitest thou me.

“ 24. (Now Annas had sent him bound
“ unto Caiaphas the high priest.)”

To the questions put to him by the high priest, with a view of entrapping him respecting his disciples and doctrines, Jesus refers to those to whom he had publicly preached. On this, in defiance of every principle of decency and decorum generally observed even by the most iniquitous courts, to give a color of justice to their proceedings, and in direct violation of the Jewish law, which allowed the accused party freedom of speech to plead his own cause, one of the officers struck Jesus a blow, under pretence that his re-
ply

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ply was an insult to the high priest; nor does it any where appear that he was even rebuked for so gross a breach of propriety. Our meek Redeemer mildly remonstrates against such treatment, desiring that, if he has spoken any thing wrong, it may be proved against him, but that he may not be subjected to blows if he has by his words given no just cause of offence. Annas, in causing our Lord to be bound when he had sent him to Caiaphas, seems to have usurped an authority that did not belong to him, for the purpose of adding to his sufferings: but, it is worthy of remark, that, throughout the whole of these iniquitous proceedings, no more attention seems to have been paid to legal forms, than to the more substantial principles of justice.

“ 25. And Simon - Peter stood and
“ warmed himself: they said therefore
“ unto him, Art not thou also one of his
“ disciples? He denied it, and said, I am
“ not.

“ 26. One

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· “ 26. One of the servants of the high
“ priest, being his kinsman whose ear
“ Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee
“ in the garden with him ?

“ 27. Peter then denied again : and
“ immediately the cock crew.”

In St. Luke's gospel (chap. xxii. ver. 51. 62.) we may find the remainder of this story, which affords so many striking lessons for the regulation of our conduct.
“ And the Lord turned, and looked upon
“ Peter : and Peter remembered the word
“ of the Lord, how he had said unto him,
“ Before the cock crow thou shalt deny
“ me thrice. And Peter went out and
“ wept bitterly.”

The fall of St. Peter, at the same time that it affords a melancholy instance of human infirmity, sets before us a signal example of divine mercy, in assisting human nature with grace to recover itself from the most perilous situation. He seems to have been possessed of the greatest share of natural courage and resolution of
any

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any of the disciples ; and when our blessed Lord speaks of their forsaking him, Peter, in particular, expresses his abhorrence at the idea of such baseness : yet *the same* Peter, who thought himself so secure, and whose zeal for his master could not be confined to mere professions of service, but burst forth into action in his defence, wanted the fortitude, after he was in custody, to own him for his lord, or even to admit that he had the least knowledge of him ; but, after giving prevaricating answers to those who first questioned him, concludes with oaths and curses That he knew not the man. Let this be to us a lesson of humility ; and a warning against the presumption of relying on our own strength : since Peter fell, who amongst us shall hope to resist temptation, otherwise than through God's assistance ; which is promised to all those who ask it faithfully. In the above relation, we see the danger of a first false step : the path of truth is plain and simple, and wants no embellishment to set off its native beauty ;
whilst

any of the disciples; and the Lord speaks of their foolishness in particular, expresses his abhorrence of the idea of such baseness: Peter, who thought himself his Master's whole zeal for his Master, was confined to mere profession, but burst forth into action when he wanted the fortitude, after he had today, to own him for his Lord, and admit that he had the lead of him; but, after giving promises to those who first questioned him, concludes with oaths and curses, which he knew not the man. Let this be a lesson of humility; and a warning against the presumption of relying on our own strength: since Peter fell, we shall hope to resist temptation more wisely than through God's assistance is promised to all those who are faithful. In the above relation, the danger of a first false step: the truth is plain and simple, and without embellishment to set off its name.

whilst that of falsehood leads us into the most crooked and thorny way, falsehood requires many more to follow it; and, even then, seldom escapes detection. Parents, and those who have the education of youth, cannot be too careful to guard their young minds against this mean and cowardly vice: they should be early taught a strict adherence to truth, even in the most trifling matters, by this they will escape many other vices of which falsehood is the origin.

Let us now turn to the pleasant scene of the picture, and consider Peter's repentance, and restoration to virtue. His fault, great as it was, was unpardonable, it proceeded from the impulse of passion. His heart was good. No wonder, therefore, did his beloved Lord, when he gave him a look of reproof, softened by love and affection, than he was immediately brought to a sense of his guilt, and such an abhorrence of himself, that he was unable to continue in the presence of his much-injured Master, he retires to

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his guilt in solitude, earnestly supplicating, with tears and lamentations, pardon from his offended Maker—a pardon never refused to the real penitent ; and which, we have unquestionable proof, was granted to Peter : who, not long afterwards, was honored with the gift of the holy Ghost ; and, for the rest of his life, remained unshaken in his faith to his Master, which he had the glory to seal by martyrdom.

As St. Mark relates the particulars of the examination and treatment of our blessed Lord before the high priest, much more fully than the other evangelists, I shall beg leave in this place, for the purpose of rendering the account more complete, to introduce eleven verses from the fourteenth chapter of his gospel, (from 55. to 65. inclusive) : “ And the chief priests, and all
“ the council, sought for witness against
“ Jesus to put him to death ; and found
“ none : for many bare false witness against
“ him ; but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare
“ false witness against him, saying, We
“ heard

his guilt in solitude, and
 with tears and lamentation
 his offended Maker—a pe-
 nited to the real penitence
 have unquestionable proof
 to Peter: who, not long
 honored with the gift of the
 and, for the rest of his life
 shaken in his faith to his Master
 had the glory to seal by martyrdom.

As St. Mark relates in
 the examination and trial of
 blessed Lord before the high-priest
 more fully than the other
 shall beg leave in this place
 of rendering the account more
 introduce eleven verses from the
 chapter of his gospel, (from
 inclusive): "And the chief priests
 the council, sought for witness
 "Jesus to put him to death:
 "none: for many bare false witness
 "him; but their witness agreed
 ther. And there arose certain
 false witness against him, who

"heard him say, I will destroy this
 "that is made with hands, and with-
 "days I will build another made
 "hands. But neither so did the
 "witnesses agree together. And the high-
 "priest stood up in the midst, and aske
 "saying, Answerest thou nothing?
 "is it which these witnesses against
 "But he held his peace, and a
 "nothing. Again the high-prie
 "him, and said unto him, Art thou
 "Christ, the Son of the Blessed
 "Jesus said, I am: and ye shall
 "Son of man sitting on the right
 "power, and coming in the clouds
 "Heaven. Then the high-priest
 "clothes, and said, What need
 "further witnesses? Ye have heard
 "blasphemy: what think ye? And
 "all condemned him to be guilty
 "death. And some began to spit
 "and to cover his face, and to buffet
 "and to say unto him, Prophecy:
 "servants did strike him with the palms
 "their hands."

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Our Saviour, knowing that he was pre-judged and his condemnation resolved upon, did not think it necessary to reply to all the questions put to him by the high priest on the subject of the false evidence which had been produced against him, and preserved a majestic silence; but when publicly called upon and adjured by Caiaphas (who was offended at his silence and wished to ensnare him by his answers,) to declare Whether or not he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, he no longer refused an answer, but plainly and explicitly declared himself to be The Christ, the Son of God; and that they should hereafter see him coming in the clouds of Heaven, crowned with power and glory, to judge the world. Such was the solemn declaration of our Lord—a declaration so explicit as (one would have thought) left no room to cavil at its meaning; and so it was considered at the time: it was reserved for modern unbelievers to put a forced construction upon words so plain, by asserting That as Adam and all his posterity were
by

Our Saviour, knowing he was judged and his conduct upon, did not think it needful to answer to all the questions put to him by the high priest on the subject of the Messiah which had been produced; and preserved a majesty when publicly called upon. Caiaphas (who was offended and wished to ensnare him) asked him to declare whether or not he was the Son of the Blessed, he gave no answer, but plainly and declared himself to be The Christ, God; and that they should see him coming in the clouds of heaven, crowned with power and glory over the world. Such was the declaration of our Lord—a declaration as plain as (one would have thought) room to cavil at its meaning: it was considered at the time: it was not for modern unbelievers to pervert instruction upon words so plain. That as Adam and all his posterity

by adoption and grace the sons of God, the reply of our Lord meant nothing more than that he was in that sense the Son of God. That this could not have been the intention of the high priest; who, having no doubt of the human nature and consequently participating in the advantages of it, would never have asked so foolish and unnecessary a question: his intention, clearly, was to entrap our Lord in a solemn declaration of his divinity; when he had effected, he rent his garment, and, giving up all the former pretensions and accusations against him, fixes upon him one charge; namely, that he had blasphemed, in having made himself equal with God: and upon that charge, all, without further trial, condemn him to have incurred the punishment of death. Sooner was this declaration made, the more the multitude rush forward, and inflict upon his sacred person every species of insult and abuse which their base and grovelling minds could incite them to. Dreadful the

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that the Redeemer of mankind should, by man, be reviled—loaded with injuries—dragged from one iniquitous tribunal to another, and subjected to every *species* of wanton cruelty : yet such was his situation during the whole of this night ; nor did his sufferings end but with his life.

Before we proceed further in this affecting story, it will be necessary, in order to obtain a complete knowledge of the scandalous and wicked conduct of the high priest and elders, to turn to the twenty-seventh chapter of St. Matthew, (ver. 3. 4. 5.): “ Then Judas which had betrayed
“ him, when he saw that he was condemn-
“ ed, repented himself, and brought again
“ the thirty pieces of silver to the chief
“ priests and elders, saying, I have sinned,
“ in that I have betrayed the innocent
“ blood. And they said, What is that to
“ us? see thou to that. And he cast
“ down the pieces of silver in the Temple,
“ and departed, and went and hanged
“ himself.”

To

that the Redeemer of man, be reviled—loaded, dragged from one man to another, and subjected to wanton cruelty: yet such during the whole of his sufferings end but with

Before we proceed further, it will be necessary to obtain a complete knowledge of the scandalous and wicked conduct of the high priest and elders, to turn to the twenty-seventh chapter of St. Mark (4. 5.): "Then Judas which betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought the thirty pieces of silver to the priests and elders, saying, I have betrayed the blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself."

To how great a pitch of wickedness must the chief priests and elders have arrived, when they dared to prosecute their persecution of Christ, after such an acknowledgment of his innocence in the very person who had betrayed him. Instances have occurred in which persons have been misled by false appearances or by a want of a thorough knowledge of the facts, and have punished the innocent and guilty go free: in every such case, however it has appeared that the ignorance of the judge, who presumed to pronounce sentence, has proceeded from inattention or a want of due application to the evidence produced, the whole world has justly condemned him as unworthy of so important an office: what, then, must we have to answer for, and how much greater must be their guilt, who persecuted the innocent, knowing them to be so. Judas's idol, as I have before had occasion to observe, was wealth; at whose altar he sacrificed honor, conscience, and every virtue which adorns human nature.

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hardened his heart against the gentle admonition of his Lord, conveyed in the words, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" May his wretched case prove a warning to us, to avoid covetousness and inattention to the admonitions of our own consciences! as by them Christ speaks to us, as he did to Judas when he betrayed him. How soon was this dear-bought and ill-gotten wealth cast from him with abhorrence!

Self-destruction is a crime, of all others, the most dreadful; as it cannot be repented of, and the Gospel threatens the heaviest punishment against unrepented sins. God, who gave us life, and who knows what is best for us, has alone the right to put a period to it. How great, then, is the presumption of those who, usurping his prerogative, dare to rush into their Maker's presence uncalled! Dreadful, indeed, must be their situation, who, when the Almighty in mercy sends down great afflictions on them, for the purpose of bringing them to a sense of their danger and of reclaiming

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hardened his heart against the admonition of his Lord, and his words, "Judas, betrayest thou man with a kiss?" His case prove a warning to us of the venousness and inattention of our own consciences. Christ speaks to us of Judas when he betrayed him: "This was this dear-bought and beloved son, whom I have cast from him with abhorrence."

Self-destruction is a crime, the most dreadful; as it cannot be forgiven, and the Gospel threatens punishment against unrepentant sinners who gave us life, and who love best for us, has alone the right period to it. How great, then, is the presumption of those who, usurping the prerogative, dare to rush into their presence uncalled! Dreadful, indeed, is their situation, who, when the Lord's mercy sends down great light upon them, for the purpose of bringing them to a sense of their danger and of their

ing their wandering steps, instead of turning them to the end designed, fatherly correction, and, to escape, plunge themselves, by wilful and unadvised self-murder, into temptation. It not unfrequently, however, happens that events of this nature are produced by disorders; particularly, those which prey upon the spirits: in this case, the parties can be considered as no less miserable than for any other accident, delirium, the consequence of a fever, or insanity, may cause them to commit; and are objects of compassion instead of condemnation. Let those, therefore, who are of a meek and timid disposition, guard themselves against melancholy, or despair: for when they find we are not to be allured by duty, he endeavors to distract and disrupt us in our most earnest desires, in obeying God. This is our severest trials; but, even this, we are assured of overcoming, if we will call upon Him for assistance; who is both

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and able to carry us safe through all difficulties and dangers, till we arrive at the place of the blessed, there to dwell with him for ever and ever.

Ready as we are to condemn the traitor Judas, there are too many (I fear) who pretend to repentance, without advancing so near towards it as even he did : let them not deceive themselves. How can they expect to have their repentance accepted who retain the wages of iniquity, and refuse to acknowledge the injuries they have done to others ? such penitence is a mere pretence ; by which they may, indeed, impose upon their fellow-creatures, nay, perhaps upon themselves, but can be of no avail in the sight of God.

“ 28. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of Judgment : and it was early ; and they themselves went not into the Judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the Passover.”

Although

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 " aphas unto the hall of Judgment.
 " it was early; and they thought
 " not into the Judgment-hall, that
 " should be defiled; but that they
 " eat the Passover."

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

Although the Jews were at
 time engaged in the most iniqui-
 tation ever known, endeavoring
 of false witnesses to shed innocence
 yet these same people scrupled to
 Judgment-hall, where all this pre-
 mischief and villany was to be
 ' lest they should be defiled,' and
 eat the Passover. Nothing could
 strongly prove what I have ob-
 fore, that they only attended to
 monial part of their religion, on
 weightier matters of the law—
 mercy, and truth; and were, as
 upon another occasion calls them
 " sepulchres, beautiful without, but
 " full of corruption and all uncleanness.

" 29. Pilate then went out unto
 " and said, What accusation
 " against this man?

" 30. They answered and
 " him, If he were not a malefactor,
 " would not have delivered him
 " thee.

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“ 31. Then said Pilate unto them, Take
“ ye him, and judge him according to your
“ law. The Jews, therefore, said unto
“ him, It is not lawful for us to put any
“ man to death ;

“ 32. That the saying of Jesus might be
“ fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what
“ death he should die.”

From the tribunal of the high priest, our blessed Lord is hurried away to that of the Romans. Pilate, the Roman governor, before he examines his prisoner, inquires of his accusers the nature of the crime they had to alledge against him : to which, conscious they had no charge against him which they could prove, they only reply, in general terms, That if he had not been a malefactor they would not have brought him for judgment. Pilate, who knew the rancor and envy of his accusers, wishing to escape from any share in a business which he could not but see was founded in malice, and to throw the whole upon the Jews themselves, desires
them

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 "ye him, and judge him according
 "to your law. The Jews, therefore,
 "answered him, It is not lawful for
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 their law: for, although und
 man yoke, they still retained
 of their religion, as well as th
 trying causes where the puni
 not extend to the life of th
 party. This, however, would
 the purpose of the Jews; who
 terminated on the destruction of
 Lord, applied to Pilate for th
 nation which they could not
 themselves,

"33. Then Pilate entered
 "Judgment-hall again, and ca
 "and said unto him, Art thou
 "the Jews?

"34. Jesus answered him, S
 "this thing of thyself, or did
 "it thee of me?

"35. Pilate answered, Am
 "Thine own nation, and the ch
 "have delivered thee unto me
 "hast thou done?

"36. Jesus answered, My k

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“ not of this world. If my kingdom were
“ of this world, then would my servants
“ fight, that I should not be delivered to
“ the Jews : but now is my kingdom not
“ from hence.

“ 37. Pilate, therefore, said unto him,
“ Art thou a king then? Jesus answered,
“ Thou sayest that I am a king. To this
“ end was I born, and for this cause came
“ I into the world, that I should bear wit-
“ nefs unto the truth. Every one that is
“ of the truth heareth my voice.”

His accusers, knowing the jealousy of the Roman government, had (as we learn from St. Luke, chap. xxiii. ver. 2.) artfully introduced into their charges against him, that he pretended to be the king of the Jews. Pilate, therefore, returns into the Judgment-hall; and, having sent for Jesus, asks If this charge against him was true? This question he might put either in derision of our blessed Lord, whose appearance indicated no symptom of royalty, or to gain information on a subject which

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 "of this world, then would
 "fight, that I should not be
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which, in his station of governor for
 mans, he might think very material
 Lord answers in a manner to satisfy
 that the Romans had no cause of
 from his claims, declaring his king-
 to be of this world, or to be of this
 force, otherwise he should have used
 worldly means to save himself from
 malice of the Jews and in support
 rights. He adds, in reply to the
 questions of Pilate, That, though
 his kingdom was of a spiritual
 that he came into the world to pro-
 doctrine of truth, and that all who
 friends to truth would attend to his
 voice.

"38. Pilate saith unto him,
 "truth? And, when he had said
 "went out again unto the Jews,
 "unto them, I find in him no fault
 "39. But ye have a custom,
 "should release unto you one at
 "over: will ye, therefore, that I
 "unto you the King of the Jews

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“ 40. Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”

Pilate having asked ‘ What is truth ? ’ returns, without waiting for an answer, to the Jews, and declared That having examined Jesus, he could find no fault at all in him. Too many there are (I fear) who, like Pilate, will not give themselves the trouble, or time, to search into the truth and beauty of Christ’s divine gospel, tho’ like him they may ask some barren questions on the subject. Pilate, who saw the injustice of the Jews’ proceedings with respect to Christ, and was desirous to let him escape, now proposes to them, with a view to release Jesus, that they should use the privilege they possessed, of having a prisoner released to them at the Passover : an indulgence granted to them by the Roman government. This, however, would have totally defeated their revengeful purposes ; and the chief priests and elders, therefore, persuaded the
the

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the multitude to choose Barabbas
 torious robber and murderer, as the
 of their clemency, in preference
 whom but a few days before they
 ushered into Jerusalem, with the
 acclamations of joy and reverence
 king of the Jews. And although
 greatest vengeance was denounced
 Jewish law against the shedding
 cent blood, yet the rage and mad
 inflamed to such a height, that Pilate
 declared himself convinced of his
 nocence, and that no part of the
 the blood of so just a person should
 on him, they all exclaimed, as with
 voice, "His blood be on us, and
 "children." — (St. Luke, chapter
 verse 34.) It is needless, in this
 to remind my readers how completely
 this curse has been fulfilled upon our
 fated race.

Now was the time when the prop-
 of Daniel was to be fulfilled, (Dan.
 ver. 24.): "Seventy weeks are
 "mined upon thy people and upon
 thy land."

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“ holy city, to finish the transgression, and
“ to make an end of sins, and to make
“ reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring
“ in everlasting righteousness, and to seal
“ up the vision and prophecy, and to
“ anoint the Most Holy.” The Messiah
himself fulfilled the whole of the Jewish
law, and then abolished it; laying down
his life for the sins of the whole world;
and, after his glorious resurrection and
ascension, he sent the gift of the holy
Ghost, for the propagating and establishing
of his divine gospel; which ensures the
pardon of all iniquity, upon sincere re-
pentance and amendment of life. This
brings justification, by the free grace of
God, in Christ Jesus, our righteousness;
who having fulfilled all the prophecies
concerning his life and death, they, con-
sequently, were then brought to an end.

May we all be ranked amongst the faith-
ful, who are to enjoy those unspeakable
blessings which Christ has purchased for
us by his most precious death, resurrection
and ascension: grant this, most merciful
Father,

"holy city, to finish the work

"to make an end of sin

"reconciliation for iniquity

"in everlasting righteousness

"up the vision and promise

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Father, for the sake of the Father,
our Lord; to whom, with The
Holy Ghost, be all honor, glory
and thanksgiving, world without
end.
Amen.

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CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XIX.

“ 1. **T**HEN Pilate, therefore, took Jesus, and scourged him.

“ 2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

“ 3. And said, Hail, king of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.”

That the Roman governor should allow such cruelties to be exercised on a prisoner under trial, seems very surprizing, particularly as we may see by all Pilate's actions that he wished to save our Lord's life: this leads to the supposition that he permitted

CHAPTER THE TWENTY

ST. JOHN, CHAPTER

“ 1. **T**HEN Pilate, thereto
 “ *sus, and scourged*
 “ 2. And the soldiers plaited
 “ *of thorns, and put it on his*
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mitted him to be ‘scourged’ and
 wise cruelly and insultingly treat-
 the hope that, by gratifying their
 so far, some spark of compassion re-
 excited in the breasts of his mercil-
 secutors, and that he might pre-
 them to spare his life; but this,
 his other endeavors, proved fruit-
 only made them the more outraged
 increased their desire to add fresh
 to the meek and humble Jesus; who
 ferred himself to be led “as a lamb
 “slaughter; and as a sheep before
 “shearers is dumb, so opened he
 “mouth.” How must it have filled
 beholders with astonishment and
 to see the very person who had done
 miraculous and merciful acts;
 them, subjected to such accumula-
 unheard-of insults! But those
 of royalty with which the Jews in-
 insulted our blessed Lord, were all
 turned into real dignities: the ‘crown
 of thorns’ was soon converted into
 glory, and the reed mentioned

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Matthew to have been put into his right hand, became a sceptre of righteousness: and he, to whom the chief priests and rulers gave, in derision, the title of king of the Jews, became acknowledged by the powers of the earth as King of kings, Lord of lords, and the universal Sovereign of the world.

“ 4. Pilate, therefore, went forth again,
“ and saith unto them, Behold, I bring
“ him forth to you, that ye may know
“ that I find no fault in him.

“ 5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing
“ the crown of thorns, and the purple
“ robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Be-
“ hold the man !

“ 6. When the chief priests, therefore,
“ and officers saw him, they cried out,
“ saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate
“ saith unto them, Take ye him, and cru-
“ cify him : for I find no fault in him.

“ 7. The Jews answered him, We have
“ a law, and by our law he ought to die,
“ because he made himself the Son of God.

“ 8. When

Matthew to have been put in his hand, became a sceptre in his hand, and he, to whom the chief priests gave, in derision, the sceptre of the Jews, became acknowledged as the Lord of lords, and the sovereign of the world.

"4. Pilate, therefore, went and saith unto them, *Behold him forth to you, that ye may see that I find no fault in him.*

"5. Then came Jesus before him, and he put on the crown of thorns, and the robe. And Pilate saith unto him, *Hold the man!*

"6. When the chief priests and officers saw him, they said unto him, *Crucify him, crucify him.* And he saith unto them, *Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.*

"7. The Jews answered him, *Saying, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

"8. When Pilate, therefore, heard these sayings, he was the more afraid.

"9. And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, *Wilt thou say nothing to me? But Jesus gave him no answer.*

"10. Then saith Pilate unto him, *Hearest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?*

"11. Jesus answered, *Thou sayest right, for I have no power at all against me: but what I have said, I have said, for it were given thee from above, and thou shalt knowest that I have said the truth, for he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

"12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: for whosoever maketh himself a king, he opposeth himself against Cæsar.*

"13. When Pilate, therefore, had said these things, he brought Jesus forth, that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat in the place that is called the Pavement: in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

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“ 14. And it was the preparation of
“ the Passover, and about the sixth hour:
“ and he saith unto the Jews, Behold
“ your King!

“ 15. But they cried out, Away with
“ him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate
“ saith unto them, Shall I crucify your
“ King? The chief priests answered, We
“ have no king but Cesar.

“ 16. Then delivered he him, therefore,
“ unto them to be crucified. And they
“ took Jesus, and led him away.

“ 17. And he, bearing his cross, went
“ forth into a place called the place of a
“ scull, which is called in the Hebrew,
“ Golgotha;

“ 18. Where they crucified him, and
“ two other with him, on either side one,
“ and Jesus in the midst.”

Pilate, though disheartened at the obduracy of the Jews to the sufferings of Jesus, did not yet give up the attempt to save him. Having no personal enmity to our Lord, the common feelings of huma-

nity

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nity incited his compassion for the
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 whom he could 'find no fault;' this
 motive was added, that of fea-
 vengeance due to the shedding of his
 blood. To remove this guilt from
 self, he, in answer to their clamor
 crucifixion, desires That they will
 him and crucify him, since he could
 no fault in him. Upon this he
 urge the plea that, by their law,
 phemy, in calling himself the son of
 was deserving of death; but this,
 of producing the desired effect upon
 who was unbiassed by the Jewish
 judices, made him the more anxious
 passing a final sentence: he there-
 turns with our Lord into the Ju-
 hall, and inquires more minutely
 whence he was? But as our blessed
 knew that Pilate had not sufficient
 to brave the resentment of the Jews
 cause of innocence, but would yield
 to their intreaties, although he should
 plain himself ever so fully, he could

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silent. Pilate, hurt at what he considered as a disrespect to his authority, reminds him of his situation, and of the power which he possessed, either to save or condemn him. Our Lord checks this presumption, as far as it relates to himself, telling him that the power of which he boasted belonged to God alone ; as if he had said, though the power of life and death is vested in you, in the common course of criminal trials, yet over me you could not exercise it, had it not been decreed by the Almighty. He adds, That this would not excuse him for giving way to injustice ; although he was less guilty than the Jews : their crime in delivering him up to punishment being the effect of premeditated malice, envy and revenge ; his, only the fear of bringing himself into a disagreeable situation, by making enemies of the Jews.

This discourse of our Lord's still added to Pilate's wish to save him ; which the Jews perceiving, and fearing they should be deprived of their prey, became still more clamorous for his condemnation.

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it, had it not been decreed
mighty. He adds, That this
excuse him for giving way
although he was less guilty than
their crime in delivering him up
ment being the effect of pre-
lice, envy and revenge; his
of bringing himself into a disre-
putation, by making enemies of the

This discourse of our Lord's
Pilate's wish to save him: he
was perceiving, and fearing that
deprived of their prey, be-
re clamorous for his condemnation.

Finding they could not prevail
late by charges of a breach of the
laws, they now change their battle
endeavor, by working on his feelings
bring him over to their purpose.
this view, they now represent Je-
rival to Cæsar and an enemy to
man power; declaring that, if he
him to escape, he could be no
that government. This touched
the tenderest part: his place and
ments were at stake: he therefore
brings Jesus forth, and places him
the Judgment-seat. Here again he
another effort to save him, by ap-
to their feelings; representing our
an object of their compassion; but
endeavors to bring them to real
justice proved fruitless, and served
irritate them the more: and though
all other occasions, they were ex-
jealous of the encroachment of the
power, yet, now that the gratifica-
their malice depended upon it, they
happy to acknowledge it in its ut-

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tent, declaring That they will have no king but Cæsar. Pilate, who, doubtless, intended to mock and deride them, asks If he shall crucify their King? and, when they became extremely outrageous, gave a reluctant consent to his being put to death. In the conduct of Pilate we have a memorable instance (which is confirmed by every day's experience) of the unfitness of a timid, or self-interested, person, to fill any place of importance. His character seems to have been a strange mixture of good and evil: the principles of natural justice and humanity held a struggle in his mind with those of fear and self-interest; unfortunately for him, the latter prevailed, and made him a partaker of that guilt which, by his power, he might and ought to have prevented; and, rather than risk the displeasure of the Jews—the exciting a tumult amongst them, or furnishing them with a plausible ground of complaint against him to Cæsar, he determined to sacrifice a person of whose innocence he was convinced, but who, being a stranger
of

of no rank or consequence in the world, he set no account by.

The other three evangelists mention That a man, of the name of Simon of Cyrene, was compelled to carry his cross; whereas St. John says That our Lord himself bore it: these differences are, however, easily explained. It seems probable that our Lord carried it part of the way; but, the distance being very considerable and the weight very great, he must have been unable to bear it the whole way, and Simon was therefore compelled to relieve, or at least to assist him in the task.

Let us here pause, and take a view of the Lord of glory going to execution, weighed down with every misery and distress which power, malice, and rage could invent: and if such a picture will not excite in us abhorrence and detestation of the cause of his sufferings, we must be far gone in guilt indeed. Many who followed him to execution were, there is no doubt, amongst those who a short time before attended his public entry into Jerusalem

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saalem with loud hosannas and every demonstration of joy and respect, yet now, in his distress, not only refused him the common offices of humanity, but joined in reviling and insulting him. The fickleness and inconsistency of the multitude never shewed itself more strongly, than upon the present occasion; and may afford a useful warning to such as are inclined to place any dependance upon popular favor. How sublime is the conduct of our merciful Saviour: how superior to every system of morality ever offered to mankind! Instead of resenting the ill-usage he experienced, he endures it all, with the utmost patience and resignation, and prays to his Father in favor of the very persons who were inflicting these torments upon him.

They arrive, at length, at Golgotha, the place fixed upon for his execution, where they consummate their execrable barbarity by nailing our blessed Lord to a cross; and, to render his death still more ignominious, they crucify two common malefactors, one on each side of him.

I have

fallen with loud hosannas: demonstration of joy and love in his distress, not only the common offices of humanity in reviling and insulting persons and inconsistency never shewed itself more than on the present occasion; as a useful warning to such as place any dependance upon him. How sublime is the conduct of our Saviour: how superior to the system of morality ever offered to mankind! Instead of resenting what he experienced, he endures it with utmost patience and resignation to his Father in favor of the reprobates who were inflicting these torments. They arrive, at length, at Golgotha, the place fixed upon for his execution; they consummate their execrability by nailing our blessed Lord to the cross; and, to render his death more odious, they crucify two malefactors, one on each side of him.

I have already treated so fully of the conduct of the penitent malefactor, that I suffered at the same time with our Lord, and the obvious inferences to be drawn from it, that little remains for me to serve in this place; suffice it therefore to remark, that if, from the conduct of the penitent thief, we may be too apt to indulge hopes of the efficacy of a repentance, we should turn and consider the fate of the other; who, upon equal advantages, instead of profiting of the opportunity offered him (an opportunity so favorable as could never have been within the compass of his lot) when he, as even the worst of men sometimes do, determined on reformation at some future period, was abandoned to the merciless persecutors of our Lord in taunts and revilings, adding to his guilt at the last moment of his life. Let us not be misled by fallacious hopes to slight the admonitions of our conscience, whilst in full strength and vigor of body and mind; no

it, (as Felix did to Paul, when made to tremble on his Judgment-seat by the irresistible force of his preaching of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come:) “Go thy way for this time; when I have “a convenient season, I will call for thee:” let us reflect that no season can be so proper for repentance, as that wherein our conscience makes us tremble at the fear of having offended God; and, whilst time and opportunity are afforded us, make our calling and election sure. In this we cannot fail, if we follow the rules laid down for us in the Gospel.

As St. John does not mention the miraculous darkness, and other supernatural events which took place at the time of our Lord’s crucifixion, I shall introduce the account of them from St. Matthew, (chap. xxvii. ver. 45. to 54.) “Now from “the sixth hour there was darkness over “all the land unto the ninth hour. And “about the ninth hour Jesus cried with “a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama “sabachthani? that is to say, My God,
“my

it, (as Felix did to Paul) tremble on his Judgment: the visible force of his preaching, temperance, and justice. Go thy way for this time: a convenient season, I think, let us reflect that no fear of conscience makes us tremble, having offended God; and opportunity are above our calling and election but cannot fail, if we follow it down for us in the Gospel.

As St. John does not mention the darknes, and other events which took place at our Lord's crucifixion, I find the account of them from St. Luke (chap. xxvii. ver. 45. to 54.) "the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour: about the ninth hour Jesus said with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, sabachthani? that is to say, My

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

"my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, this man blasphemes Elias. And straightway, when they ran and took a sponge, and put it on him with vinegar, and put it on him and gave him to drink. The Jews, however, let us see whether Elias was to save him. Jesus, when he had said again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost: And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and abode unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, and Jesus, saw the earthquake, and all things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

To understand the full effect of this premature darkness, we must take notice that, by the mode in which the Jews reckoned their time; that is, by dividing their day into four equal parts, (which still subsists in all the Eastern countries;) the sixth hour with them was all that space of time between our nine o'clock in the morning and noon, and the ninth hour from that time to our three o'clock in the afternoon: consequently, the time in which this darkness prevailed, was from noon-day till three in the afternoon. This darkness, if produced by an eclipse of the sun, was not the less miraculous; because all eclipses of the sun, from the very nature of things, take place in the season of the new moon. Now, the day on which our Lord was crucified, the moon was at the full, (it being the fifteenth of the moon, as we learn from history): it was no partial eclipse, but was seen over all the earth that was under the same hemisphere: besides, no natural eclipse can
last

To understand the premature darkness, we see that, by the mode in which they divided their time; that is, dividing the day into four equal parts, which subsists in all the Eastern nations, the sixth hour with them was the time between our time morning and noon, and from that time to our time afternoon: consequently, when this darkness prevailed, it was day till three in the afternoon, if produced by an eclipse of the sun, was not the less miraculous, as all eclipses of the sun, from the nature of things, take place at the new moon. Now, the day of our Lord was crucified, the day of the full, (it being the fifteenth day of the month), as we learn from him, no partial eclipse, but was seen over the earth that was under the full moon: besides, no natural cause

last three hours: so that it appears that this was a miraculous eclipse; together with the earthquake—tossing the vail of the temple, (a token that Jehovah was about to desert it,); the Jews were no longer to continue a peculiar people, nor for the future to be the entire charge of his word and ordinances, the Christian dispensation equally offered to Jew and Gentile. The other uncommon convulsions which were denunciations of the wrath and his abhorrence of the iniquity carrying on. As to the opening graves, and the appearance of the saints at Jerusalem, it seems to have taken place till after our Lord's resurrection; although St. Matthew mentions all the prodigies of that day, and introduces it here.

The above particulars will serve to explain the cause why the time of the commemoration of these events is not any particular day, but varies with the moon: as our Good-Friday must

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be that which comes nearest to the full of the moon at that season ; and this regulates all the rest.

The centurion and the guard who were watching Christ must, naturally, have been greatly terrified as well as astonished at the prodigies they were witnesses of ; and, having no prejudices of their own to combat, they open their hearts to conviction, and glorify God by a confession of the truth—that Jesus was the Son of God.

“ 19. And Pilate wrote a title, and put
“ it on the cross. And the writing was
“ JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING
“ OF THE JEWS.

“ 20. This title then read many of the
“ Jews : for the place where Jesus was
“ crucified was nigh to the city : and it
“ was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and
“ Latin.

“ 21. Then said the chief priests of the
“ Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of
“ the Jews ; but that he said, I am King
“ of the Jews.

“ 22. Pilate

be that which comes next:
the moon at that season
lutes all the rest.

The centurion and they
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“ OF THE JEWS.

“ 20. This title then read
“ Jews: for the place where
“ crucified was nigh to the cross
“ was written in Hebrew, and in
“ Latin.

“ 21. Then said the chief priests
“ Jews to Pilate, Write not, Thou
“ the Jews; but that he said, I am
of the Jews.

“ 22. Pilate answered, What
“ written, I have written.”

The Jews were displeased at
the inscription ordered by Pilate; think
disgrace to have a person who was
living as a common malefactor style
king; particularly, as it was written
three languages most in use, and, in
a public place and very near the cross,
must have been read not by them
alone, but by the various strangers
assembled at Jerusalem at the time
celebration of the Passover: they then
desired to have it altered to such
as should declare him to suffer as an insur-
gent and pretender to their crown. But
they who felt no good-will towards their
Saviour, under the constraint they had by their
clamours and tumultuous conduct put upon
him, and, probably, being as much dis-
pleased with himself for having given
occasion to them, seems pleased with the oppor-
tunity of mortifying them by refusing per-
mit to enter further into their matter.

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We may either account for his denial of their request, in this way, or by the supposition that he might have been withheld by a superior Power from adding to the ignominy of our Lord's death.

The mode in which our Saviour was to suffer, is alluded to in the prophecy of Isaiah, (chap. liii. ver. 12.): "Therefore
" will I divide him a portion with the
" great, and he shall divide the spoil with
" the strong; because he hath poured out
" his soul unto death: and he was num-
" bered with the transgressors; and he
" bare the sin of many, and made inter-
" cession for the transgressors."

" 23. Then the soldiers, when they had
" crucified Jesus, took his garments (and
" made four parts, to every soldier a part)
" and also his coat: now the coat was
" without seam, woven from the top
" throughout.

" 24. They said therefore among
" themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast
" lots for it, whose it shall be: that the
" Scripture

“Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,
“ they parted my raiment among them,
“ and for my vesture they did cast lots.
“ These things therefore the soldiers did.”

The foregoing is a prophecy of David,
(Psalm xxii. verse 18.) and requires no
comment.

“ 25. Now there stood by the cross of
“ Jesus, his mother, and his mother’s sister,
“ Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary
“ Magdalene.

“ 26. When Jesus therefore saw his
“ mother, and the disciple standing by,
“ whom he loved, he saith unto his mother,
“ Woman, behold thy son !

“ 27. Then saith he to the disciple,
“ Behold thy mother ! And from that
“ hour that disciple took her unto his own
“ home.”

It does not appear that our blessed Lord
had particularly noticed his mother, since
the commencement of his public ministry ;
for

for which I have, on a former occasion, assigned what appear to me satisfactory reasons ; but being now about to quit the world, the care of her welfare leads him to recommend her to his favorite disciple ; who most cheerfully accepts the charge, and faithfully executed it. From this, it is natural to suppose that Joseph was now dead ; otherwise she would not have wanted a protector, or affectionate friend. The conduct of our Lord, in this instance, should serve as a lesson to all who are able to take care of their relations, by making a proper provision for them ; or, where that is out of their power, by recommending them to the protection of such as are likely to supply their places when they are taken from this world. St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, says : “ Those who will not provide for their own families, have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels.” And St. John, in his Epistle, tells us : “ He that loveth not his brother,” (by which is meant all those of his family and relations,) “ whom he hath seen, how
“ can

for which I have, on the assigned what appears to be reasons; but being now in the world, the care of her is to recommend her to him who most cheerfully and faithfully executed it is natural to suppose that dead; otherwise she would be a protector, or affectionate conduct of our Lord, in this serve as a lesson to all who are in the care of their relations, by his provision for them; or, when of their power, by recommending the protection of such as are in the world. St. Paul, in his letter to Timothy, says: "Those who are not provide for their own families, they have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels." And St. John, in his first epistle, tells us: "He that loveth not his brother, by which is meant all those of his kindred and relations,) "whom he loveth."

"can he love God whom he has not seen?"

On these grounds, I cannot help differing in opinion with those who think they have an uncontrolled right to the fruits of their own skill, or industry, and that they may dissipate them on themselves, or bestow them on whom they think proper. Do we not, frequently, see some parts of a family prosper and successful in every thing they take; while others, of the same family, who may be equally good and industrious, can succeed in nothing. If success, therefore, does not depend upon our own endeavors, but on the blessing of God, then, who, for the wisest purposes, limits our limited capacities cannot permit them, disappoints the hopes of some servants whilst he realizes those of others. Are we not responsible to him for the use we make of his gifts? and can we propose any means more acceptable to him than by employing part of them in relieving the wants and distresses of

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our family as have not been equally successful with ourselves? (St. John's first epistle, chap. iii. ver. 17.) " But whoſo hath this
" world's good, and ſeeth his brother
" have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels
" of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth
" the love of God in him ?"

" 28. After this Jeſus, knowing that
" all things were now accompliſhed, that
" the Scripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I
" thirſt.

" 29. Now there was ſet a veſſel full of
" vinegar : and they filled a ſponge with
" vinegar, and put it upon hyſſop, and
" put it to his mouth.

" 30. When Jeſus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is finiſhed:
" and he bowed his head, and gave up the
" ghoſt."

In Pfalm lxi. verſe 21. we find David, ſpeaking in the perſon of the Meſſiah, ſay:
" They gave me alſo gall for my meat;
" and in my thirſt they gave me vinegar
" to

our family as have not been
ful with ourselves? (St. J.
chap. iii. ver. 17.) "But
"world's good, and he
"have need, and thus
"of compassion from him
"the love of God in him"

"28. After this Jesus
"all things were now done
"the Scripture might be fulfilled
"thirst."

"29. Now there was set
"vinegar: and they filled a
"vinegar, and put it upon a
"put it to his mouth."

"30. When Jesus, therefore,
"received the vinegar, he said, I
"and he bowed his head, and
"ghost."

In Psalm lxxix. verse 21. we find
saying in the person of the Messiah
"They gave me also gall for meat
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar."

"to drink." When therefore this
was the last of the prophecies re-
the Messiah previous to his death,
complished, our blessed Lord 'be-
head,' in token of obedience to the
his Father, 'and gave up the ghost'
should teach us, in all situations, un-
der the severest trials, that it is
to shew the utmost resignation
verence to the will of God, in our
ward actions as well as in our
The other three evangelists mention
our Lord cried with a loud voice,
then gave up the ghost; and St. John
makes this one of the proofs by which
the centurion was convinced of Jesus
the Messiah.

To understand this rightly, we
consider the nature of the death of
fixion. In this mode of punishment
life was not taken away by any sudden
violent means, but was worn out by
of pain and fatigue; so that the
must be totally exhausted, and the
son rendered incapable of any

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of voice, sometime before his spirit took its departure. The centurion, therefore, who had probably been used to attend crucifixions and knew the effect of that mode of punishment, hearing our Lord cry out with a loud voice, which proved his strength not exhausted, and seeing him on the instant expire, was convinced that his life was at his own disposal (a power which he knew belonged to God alone) and that he laid it down voluntarily.

“ 31. The Jews, therefore, because it
“ was the Preparation, that the bodies
“ should not remain upon the cross on the
“ sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was
“ an high day,) besought Pilate that their
“ legs might be broken, and that they
“ might be taken away.

“ 32. Then came the soldiers, and brake
“ the legs of the first, and of the other
“ which was crucified with him.

“ 33. But when they came to Jesus,
“ and saw that he was dead already, they
“ brake not his legs :

“ 34. But

of voice, sometime before
 his departure. The centurion
 who had probably been
 crucifixions and knew the
 mode of punishment, he
 cry out with a loud voice,
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 "an high day,) besought Pilate
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 "might be taken away.

"32. Then came the soldiers,
 "the legs of the first, and of the
 "which was crucified with him.

"33. But when they came
 and saw that he was dead already,
 brake not his legs:

"34. But one of the soldiers
 "spear pierced his side, and
 "came thereout blood and water.

"35. And he that saw it bare
 "and his record is true; and he
 "that he saith true, that ye might

"36. For these things were
 "the Scriptures should be fulfilled,
 "bone of him shall not be broken.

"37. And again, another scripture
 "They shall look on him whom
 "pierced."

The paschal lamb was a type
 and whatever is said of that applies
 to him: thus, in Exodus, ch. xi
 it is said: "Neither shall ye break
 "thereof." Psalm xxxiv. ver. 2
 "keepeth all his bones; not one
 "is broken." Also, in Numbers
 ver. 12.) where the paschal lamb
 spoken of, it is directed that they
 break any bone of it. That the
 not break the legs of Jesus, as with
 others', was, evidently, from an over-

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Power preventing him, that every part of Scripture respecting the Messiah might be fulfilled. The prophecies, likewise, respecting the piercing of our Lord's side, are equally worthy of note : (Zechariah, ch. xii. ver. 10.) " And I will pour upon the " house of David, and upon the inhabi- " tants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace " and of supplications : and they shall look " upon me whom they have pierced, and " they shall mourn for him, as one mourn- " eth for his only son, and shall be in bit- " terness for him, as one that is in bitter- " ness for his first-born." This prophecy (although, doubtless, alluding to a more general conversion of the Jews at a future period) may be said to have taken place, in part, at the very time ; for we are told by St. Luke, (chap. xxiii. ver. 48.): " And " all the people that came together to that " fight, beholding the things which were " done, smote their breasts and returned." Among those described in the above verse were, probably, many who had reviled and insulted our Lord during his trial and in his

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ere, probably, many who had

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his way to execution, as also the
who pierced his side: it could not
merely his friends and followers,
are separately mentioned in the
verse.

Although it appeared to the
that our Lord was actually dead
make sure, he pierced him in the
a spear; and we are told that the
from the wound blood and water.
understand to have been a certain
of death; but it may also be con-
as a type and emblem of the two
ments of baptism and the Lord's si-

" 38. And after this, Joseph of
"thea (being a disciple of Jesus
"cretly for fear of the Jews) b
"Pilate that he might take away t
"of Jesus; and Pilate gave him
"He came, therefore, and took t
"of Jesus.

" 39. And there came also Nic
"(which at the first came to J
"night,) and brought a mixture o

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“and aloes, about an hundred pound
“weight.

“40. Then took they the body of
“Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes,
“with the spices, as the manner of the
“Jews is to bury.

“41. Now in the place where he was
“crucified, there was a garden; and in
“the garden a new sepulchre, wherein
“was never man yet laid.

“42. There laid they Jesus, therefore,
“because of the Jews’ Preparation-day;
“for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.”

Joseph of Arimathea, as well as Nicodemus, was privately a disciple of our Lord; but fear of the Jews had induced them both to conceal their sentiments during his life-time. They now suffer their attachment to be publicly known; the former, by begging the body of Jesus; which Pilate immediately grants: the latter, by furnishing costly spices for his burial. We may naturally suppose that the marvellous events which attended his execution,

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"weight.

"40. Then took the

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"Jews is to bury.

"41. Now in the place

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"the garden a new sepulchre,

"was never man yet laid

"42. There laid they Jesus

"because of the Jews' Precept

"for the sepulchre was high

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kept them both to conceal their
attachment during his life-time. They
both, by begging the body of
the former, by begging the body of
the latter, by furnishing costly spices
for burial. We may naturally expect
the marvellous events which and

execution, added to the indignation
must have felt at the unheard-of
exercised upon our blessed Lord, pro-
duced this change in them.

Thus was fulfilled the prophe-
cy of Isaiah, (chap. liii. ver. 9.) : "And
"his grave with the wicked, and
"rich in his death; because he had
"no violence, neither was any
"in his mouth." Although Christ
only guiltless person on earth, yet
taken upon himself our sins, he suf-
fered to the punishment due to them—
that of a malefactor, and to be laid in
a grave as if he had been mere sinful man:
and also made his grave 'with the rich';
his body was laid in the stone sepulchre
of Joseph, a man of rank and conse-
quence, and the most costly spices were
used at his burial.

Having now seen all the prophe-
cies respecting our Lord's life and death
fulfilled, I shall beg my reader's indul-
gence whilst I offer a few observations on
the words of our Creed which says, "He de-

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"into Hell." On this subject, divines have held different opinions; some asserting that the word made use of and which has been translated 'hell' means nothing more than 'the grave', or the place of the dead; and thus it certainly seems to have been understood by those who composed the Creed, as it goes on to say, "The third day he rose again from the dead:" others are of opinion that the words should be understood in a literal sense, and that his soul did actually descend into Hell. In the sixteenth Psalm, (verse 10.) David, (speaking in the person of Christ,) says: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell: "neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One "to see corruption." If we adopt the latter idea, we are not to suppose that he suffered any of its torments, but that he went thither to manifest his triumph over the grand enemy of mankind, whose champion and redeemer he was: but whatever it was which carried him thither, if he really did descend into Hell, of this we may be assured, that it was in his character

"into Hell." On this have held different opinions that the word made it has been translated 'hell' more than 'the grave', or 'dead'; and thus it certainly been understood by the Creed, as it goes on every day he rose again from the dead; and thus it is of opinion that the word is understood in a literal sense, and that the soul did actually descend into the sixteenth Psalm, (speaking in the person of Christ) "For thou wilt not leave us in the power of our enemies; neither wilt thou suffer us to be destroyed: thou shalt deliver us from all adversity, and thou shalt deliver us from all oppression." If we take the latter idea, we are not to suppose that he suffered any of its torments; he went thither to manifest himself over the grand enemy of mankind, the devil, his champion and redeemer; and whatever it was which carried him down, if he really did descend into Hell, we may be assured, that it was

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

after the Saviour of mankind, for the glory and redemption of the human race. Let us, with grateful hearts, adore his goodness; and to him, with the Holy Ghost, offer thanksgiving for ever and ever.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XX.

BEFORE we enter upon the chapter now before us, I shall beg leave, as I have done upon some other occasions, to call the attention of my readers to the importance of the subject on which it treats — namely, the resurrection of our blessed Lord : in our firm belief of which all our hopes of happiness through him must depend ; for without this most glorious proof of his divinity, our faith in him would be useless : thus, St. Paul tells us, in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians : “ If Christ be
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“ and

CHAPTER THE TWENTY

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 in the fifteenth chapter of 1
 to the Corinthians: “If Christ
 is risen, then is our preaching

“and your faith is also vain;” and
 in the seventeenth verse of the same
 “And if Christ be not raised, your
 faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”
 The church, fully sensible of the
 necessity of impressing this faith in our
 hearts, has appointed an annual commemoration
 of this and the other great and meritorious
 events which attended our Lord’s
 at the particular seasons when they
 place; by which we become, as
 spectators of them, and, with the
 faith, see the blessed babe—the
 Saviour—and the Lord of glory
 having burst asunder the bands of
 death, risen triumphantly from the grave,
 led captivity captive, and become
 conqueror over death and hell, ascended
 to those glorious mansions from
 whence he came, there to receive all honor,
 dominion, worship and glory, world-
 without-end. When we are assembled to
 commemorate these great and wonderful
 events, can we fail to feel our hearts deeply
 affected in them, and to offer the tri-

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our most grateful acknowledgments to God for such unmerited favors? Stanhope speaks thus of Easter-day : " This is that
 " day peculiar to Christians, which dis-
 " tinguishes us from all the world. Be-
 " sides the day of our Lord's nativity,
 " Jews and Gentiles will confess that of
 " his passion. All the adversaries of our
 " religion boast of supposing they had
 " foiled this champion of souls : but this
 " day of his resurrection none but we can
 " celebrate, because none but we acknow-
 " ledge that he came off with conquest,
 " and defeated all that malice which en-
 " deavored his destruction." If such is the
 importance of this faith, let us seriously
 and attentively reflect what are the advan-
 tages it brings, and what the particular
 duties it imposes on us. The advantages
 of such a faith are the firm assurance and
 conviction that, as our Lord and Master
 was raised from the grave and ascended
 into Heaven, in like manner shall the
 bodies of all those who are his true and
 faithful servants arise, and become par-
 takers

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 " distinguishes us from all
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takers with him of everlasting ha-
 bit in his kingdom. Of this we can have
 no doubt; since the word of God, and
 truth itself, has declared it. The duties
 imposed on us by this faith are, to love
 and rejoice in God, and to devote
 ourselves entirely to his service, more par-
 ticularly upon that day which he has de-
 voted to himself. On Christians there is
 no tie to keep this day holy: not
 as it is their sabbath, but also as it was
 to the first day of the week from
 the beginning (which was the Jewish sabbath)
 honor of their Lord and Master,
 perpetual remembrance of the innumerable
 advantages ensured to them by his resur-
 rection:—on that glorious day our
 souls were set at liberty, and all those
 bonds cancelled which by sin were
 contracted.

Notwithstanding I have treated
 of this on a former occasion, pretty much
 upon the due observation of the
 day, yet so much am I convinced that
 the greatest part of the wickedness w

see practised is owing to the neglect of this duty, that I cannot help once more reminding my readers of the great importance of it. I would also wish to warn them against an opinion which, I fear, is too general amongst all ranks of people, that, provided they pass a part of the day in the service of the church, they are at liberty to spend the remainder of it in any way that either fancy, pleasure, or interest, may incite them to. This becomes still more dangerous when practised by people of superior rank, or in the heads of families, by the example it holds out to their children and dependants; who will be very apt, if they see their elders and superiors consider any part of the Lord's day as less sacred than the rest, to lose their reverence for it altogether. Surely, the few hours which the Lord has dedicated to himself, ought not to be thought too much by creatures who owe every thing, even their very existence, to him; more especially when we consider, that this duty is required of us for our own
interest,

see practised is owing to this duty, that I cannot reminding my readers the importance of it. I would them against an opinion is too general amongst us that, provided they pass in the service of the church, liberty to spend the remainder of the day in any way that either fancy, pleasure, or inclination may incite them to. This is more dangerous when practised by those of superior rank, or in the families, by the example of their children and dependants. They may be very apt, if they see their superiors consider any part of the day as less sacred than the rest, to lose their reverence for it altogether. The few hours which the Lord has dedicated to himself, ought not to be so much by creatures who are living, even their very existence is especially when we consider that duty is required of us for

interest, that we may be rendered of infinite happiness to all eternity properly might the time, previous to the commencement of the church-service, be employed in meditation, and in bringing our minds into that devout frame, by which alone we can properly perform the duty; and the time afterwards, in endeavoring to remedy any failures, want, or omissions, which we may have been guilty of in the course of it!

Although the apostles, upon the day before-mentioned, were permitted to do what they pleased the day on which the sabbath was to be kept, they gave no authority to the church to curtail its length, or to employ any part of it to business or pleasure. That respect it continued exactly as it was to Moses by God himself from Sinai.

“ 1. The first day of the week
 “ Mary Magdalene, early, when it
 “ dark, unto the sepulchre, and the
 “ stone taken away from the sepulchre.”

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“ 2. Then she runneth, and cometh to
“ Simon-Peter, and to the other disciple
“ whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them,
“ They have taken away the Lord out of
“ the sepulchre, and we know not where
“ they have laid him.”

Although St. John mentions Mary Magdalene only, upon this occasion, (probably because she was the principal person, being the first to whom our Lord shewed himself,) yet there can be no doubt but she had companions with her : we cannot suppose she would have gone by herself upon such an errand, and at such an hour too ; and so we are told by the other evangelists, who mention the names of some other women with her, as also that their design was to anoint his body with spices they had before prepared for that purpose, as the last sad office of respectful regard they could shew him. On their arrival at the sepulchre, they found the stone rolled away from its mouth : a circumstance which (St. Mark tells us) relieved

"2. Then she remembered
 "Simon-Peter, and to him
 "whom Jesus loved, and
 "They have taken away
 "the sepulchre, and we
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OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR

relieved them from much people
 they knew not how they should
 admittance for the performance
 of pious duties. For the better un-
 derstanding of this passage, we must turn
 to Matthew, chap. xxvii. where we find
 that the chief priests and elders ap-
 pointed Pilate for a guard to secure the
 body of Christ, under pretence of the danger
 of being stolen away by his disciples.
 They might then spread a report that
 he was arisen from the dead, as when
 he had foretold. Pilate granting
 their request, they went to the sepulchre
 and made every thing as secure as
 possible, sealing the stone which (St. Mark
 tells us) was rolled to the mouth of it, and
 set a guard over it. These measures
 and the caution which they now took, serve
 as the strongest proofs against
 themselves; as they effectually bar-
 the door to any artifice being employed
 by the disciples, had they been inclined to
 in the pursuance of the story, St. Matthe-
 w, xxviii. ver. 2. 3. 4.) tells us, that

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the women as above related arrived at the sepulchre, "there was a great earthquake: "for the angel of the Lord descended "from Heaven, and came and rolled back "the stone from the door, and sat upon "it. His countenance was like lightning, "and his raiment white as snow: and for "fear of him the keepers did shake, and "became as dead men;" and, (in the 12th and three following verses) he adds: "Now, "when they were going," (that is, the disciples,) "behold, some of the watch came "into the city, and shewed unto the chief "priests all the things that were done. "And when they were assembled with "the elders, and had taken counsel, they "gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, "and stole him away while we slept. "And if this come to the governor's ears, "we will persuade him, and secure you. "So they took the money, and did as they "were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until "this day."

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The circumstance of the soldi
 eye-witnesses of all the miraculo
 which attended the resurrectio
 Lord, placed the truth of it on
 more satisfactory ground, than
 ciples and friends had been
 evidences of it: nay, it is beyond
 that even the priests and elders th
 were fully convinced by the re
 the soldiers; as, otherwise, the
 have brought them to trial, a
 caused the utmost severity of t
 be inflicted on them for their ne
 raising such a falsehood, instead
 them money. And, here, we
 serve how naturally one crime
 another: they had shed innocent
 and are now guilty of the bas
 suborning false witnesses to co
 proofs of it. Their conduct o
 occasion, appears still more detest
 upon any former; because the
 itself proves their conviction th
 Christ, whom they had slain, was
 the promised Messiah. We may

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serve the difficulties and contradictions those persons fall into, who deviate from the path of truth.

It is impossible to conceive any thing more glaringly absurd, than the story invented upon this occasion : indeed, it would seem, that fear, added to their malice, had deprived them of their reasoning faculties. In the first place, had the soldiers been asleep, how could they tell what happened during that period ? But, supposing they were so, can it be conceived that they would publish their own guilt, in a point so highly criminal by military discipline that they must put themselves into the power of every one to whom they related it, except they were assured of pardon and security from those who had set them to watch the sepulchre ? And no stronger evidence can be wanted of the falsehood of the whole tale, and that it was invented to answer the purposes of the priests and elders, than that they should suffer those men to go unpunished, who by so scandalous a breach of duty had defeated

serve the difficulties and those persons fall into, viz. the path of truth.

It is impossible to conceive more glaringly absurd, is vented upon this occasion would seem, that fear, anxiety, had deprived them of their faculties. In the first place: if the soldiers had been asleep, how could it have happened during that period of time, that they would publish their discovery in a point so highly criminal, and subject to discipline that they must put themselves into the power of every one who related it, except they were under guard and security from their masters to watch the sepulchre. No stronger evidence can be adduced of the falsehood of the whole tale, than is invented to answer the purposes of the priests and elders, than that they would have those men to go unpunished for such a scandalous a breach of duty.

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feated their purpose (as declared to them) of proving Jesus an impostor by the fulfilment of his prophecy That he would rise from the dead on the third day. This appears to have confounded the minds of both of the priests and soldiers; succeeding ages might be convinced of the malice of the former, and the falsehood of the latter.—But to return to our subject.

It is plain that the women had no least idea of their Lord's being risen from the dead, by their informing the Jews that he had been taken out of the sepulchre, and that they knew not where he had been laid.

“ 3. Peter, therefore, went forth with that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

“ 4. So they ran both together; but the other disciple did out-run Peter, and he came first to the sepulchre.

“ 5. And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying there; and yet he went not in.

“ 6.

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“ 6. Then cometh Simon-Peter follow-
“ ing him, and went into the sepulchre;
“ and seeth the linen clothes lie,

“ 7. And the napkin that was about
“ his head, not lying with the linen
“ clothes, but wrapped together in a place
“ by itself.

“ 8. Then went in also that other dis-
“ ciple which came first to the sepulchre;
“ and he saw, and believed.

“ 9. For as yet they knew not the
“ Scripture, that he must rise again from
“ the dead.

“ 10. Then the disciples went away
“ again unto their own home.”

The two disciples to whom Mary Magdalene had communicated what she had observed, repaired immediately to the sepulchre, to satisfy themselves of the fact; but he who arrived first did not venture in till Peter, whose courage seldom failed him, led the way. They found that the body was not there, and formed the same judgment as Mary had done—that somebody
had

"6. Then cometh Simon
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had stolen it away: for, as yet,
not understand the meaning of our
discourses respecting his resurrection:
therefore returned home, wonder-
doubt, that, as they had not at-
so dangerous an undertaking, any
else should have done it. The
stance, too, of the burial-clothes be-
hind, must have added to their sur-
since it is not probable that a person
ing to steal away the body would
strip it, and to lay the clothes in
order; as every moment they stay
have added to the danger of detection.
The utmost expedition would, neces-
sarily, have been used in the prepa-
ance of so hazardous an attempt,
even supposing there had been nothing
thing was in itself impracticable;
spices used by Nicodemus and Joseph
the preparation for his burial, would
made the linen stick so close to the
after it had lain any time in that state,
it must have been next to impossi-
ble to separate them. The napkin being

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together, and laid by itself, serves to prove that there was not the least hurry or confusion when our Lord left the sepulchre; which would undoubtedly have been the case, had he been stolen from thence. These minute circumstances are of much more importance than many people may be aware of; as, when seriously and properly considered, they add to the many other convincing proofs of Christ's resurrection. That this was the opinion of St. John, there can be no doubt; otherwise he would not have detailed them so particularly. Every circumstance respecting our Lord's burial appears to have been so ordered, by an over-ruling Power, as to leave no shadow of doubt of the reality of his resurrection, or that it was effected by his own power and authority. Thus, he was buried in a new tomb, 'where yet never man was laid:' had it been otherwise, the Jews might have fainted some one of the bodies before laid there, and have attributed his arising from the dead to a circumstance similar to that related

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 never man was laid: had it be-
 wife, the Jews might have laid
 one of the bodies before him he
 have attributed his arising from
 a circumstance similar to that

in the second book of Kings, (ch
 ver. 21.) where we are informed
 corpse being let down into the sepul-
 of Elisha, upon touching the bones
 prophet, revived and stood upon
 We are told, moreover, That
 pulchre was hewn out of a rock:
 the rock itself must have formed
 rendered it impregnable to any
 from any other part than the front
 the watch was set, and to which a
 affixed, after they had placed a lamp
 there. Nothing was therefore less
 priests and elders, but the invention
 story as absurd as it was improbable

“ 11. But Mary stood without
 “ sepulchre, weeping: and as she
 “ she stooped down, and looked
 “ sepulchre.

“ 12. And seeth two angels in
 “ sitting, the one at the head, and
 “ other at the feet, where the body
 “ of Jesus had lain.

“ 13. And they say unto her, Rise

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“ why weepest thou ? She saith unto them,
“ Because they have taken away my Lord,
“ and I know not where they have laid him.

“ 14. And when she had thus said, she
“ turned herself back, and saw Jesus stand-
“ ing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

“ 15. Jesus saith unto her, Woman,
“ why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ?
“ She, supposing him to be the gardener,
“ saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne
“ him hence, tell me where thou hast laid
“ him, and I will take him away.

“ 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She
“ turned herself, and saith unto him, Rab-
“ boni ; which is to say, Master.

“ 17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me
“ not : for I am not yet ascended to my
“ Father : but go to my brethren, and say
“ unto them, I ascend unto my Father,
“ and your Father, and to my God and
“ your God.

“ 18. Mary Magdalene came and told
“ the disciples that she had seen the Lord,
“ and that he had spoken these things
“ unto her.”

Mary

" why weepst thou? She

" Because they have tak

" and I know not where:

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" 18. Mary Magdalene came

" the disciples that she had seen

" and that he had spoken the

" into her."

Mary Magdalene, by her pre-
 duct, made good the saying of
 to Simon, when this very Mary wa-
 ing his feet, respecting the beha-
 those who having widely strayed
 right path were forgiven and re-
 favor, (St. Luke, chap. vii. v.
 " Wherefore I say unto thee,
 " which are many, are forgiven
 " loved much: but to whom lit-
 " given, the same loveth 'little
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 ner as she would have done with
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really and truly her master arisen from the dead.

“ 19. Then the same day at evening,
“ being the first day of the week, when the
“ doors were shut where the disciples
“ were assembled for fear of the Jews,
“ came Jesus and stood in the midst, and
“ saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

“ 20. And when he had so said, he
“ shewed unto them his hands and his side.
“ Then were the disciples glad, when they
“ saw the Lord.

“ 21. Then said Jesus to them again,
“ Peace be unto you. As my Father
“ hath sent me, even so send I you.

“ 22. And when he had said this, he
“ breathed on them, and saith unto them,
“ Receive ye the Holy Ghost :

“ 23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they
“ are remitted unto them ; and whose so-
“ ever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

The miraculous appearance of our
blessed Lord in the midst of the disciples,
whilst

really and truly her and
the dead.

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of the Jews, must have greatly au-
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nails in his hands and feet. Havi-
saluted them with the salutation of
he gives them commission to pre-
gospel to the world; and to ena-
to perform so great an underta-
breathed upon them and infused in
that gift of the Holy Ghost, whi-
time after, visibly lighted upon
the day of Pentecost. Thus, in
ginning, God infused into Adam
breath of life; as we may learn
second chapter of Genesis, ver. 7
" the Lord God formed man of
" of the ground, and breathed
" nostrils the breath of life, and
" came a living soul." As Adam
state of inanimation, was thus en-
be a living soul, so the apostle
gift of the Holy Ghost imparted
by Christ, were filled with such ki-
of the human heart as to enable
d

distinguish between the sincere penitent and the hypocrite — between God's servants and those of the world: by this knowledge they were able to pronounce judgment upon others, and to exercise the high powers that had been intrusted to them. But whatever powers were given to the apostles by Christ himself, and which might be at first expedient for the establishment of Christianity, we have no reason to suppose that they were long continued to their successors. The text before us has, however, been made the ground-work of a superstition the most absurd that ever entered the human mind to conceive—that of the infallibility of the priest of Rome, as the successor of St. Peter, and of his power to forgive sins. Yet though the successors of the apostles cannot without presumption pretend to the power of knowing the human heart, so as to decide who are and who are not sincere, God permits his priests in his name, to declare all those absolved
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 are not sincere, God permits
 in his name, to declare all those

from their sins who sincerely re-
 believe the gospel.

“ 24. But Thomas, one of the
 “ called Didymus, was not with
 “ when Jesus came.

“ 25. The other disciples there
 “ unto him, We have seen the Lord
 “ he said unto them, Except I shall
 “ his hands the print of the nails,
 “ my finger into the print of the nail
 “ thrust my hand into his side, I
 “ believe.

“ 26. And after eight days, when
 “ disciples were within, and Thomas
 “ them. Then came Jesus, the door
 “ being shut, and stood in the midst,
 “ Peace be unto you.

“ 27. Then saith he to Thomas
 “ hither thy finger, and behold my
 “ and reach hither thy hand, and
 “ it into my side: and be not faithless
 “ believing.

“ 28. And Thomas answered
 “ unto him, My Lord and my God

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“ 29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, be-
“ cause thou hast seen me, thou hast be-
“ lieved: blessed are they that have not
“ seen, and yet have believed.

“ 30. And many other signs truly did
“ Jesus in the presence of his disciples,
“ which are not written in this book :

“ 31. But these are written, that ye
“ might believe that Jesus is the Christ the
“ Son of God ; and that believing ye
“ might have life through his name.”

As I have, upon a former occasion,
treated of the subject of St. Thomas's un-
belief, and assigned what appeared to me
the most probable reason for it, as stated
in Stanhope's observation on the gospel
for that saint's day, I shall only call the
attention of my reader to the merciful re-
ception which he met with from his gra-
cious Master, whom he refused to believe
arisen from the dead, except he not only
put his fingers upon the prints of the nails
in his hands, but also laid his hand upon
the wound in his side made by the spear:
which

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 Stanhope's observation is
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 of my reader to the section
 which he met with first
 Master, whom he refused to
 from the dead, except in his
 fingers upon the prisoner's
 hands, but also laid his hand
 and in his side made by his

which latter had nothing to do with the practice of crucifixion in general, but was peculiar to himself.

To this our blessed Lord, ever indulgent to the weakness of humanity, assents; and Thomas implicitly professes his conviction that Jesus is the truth His Lord and his God.

He pardons his former imperfection in his declaration of his faith; but, at the same time, points out to him the superiority of all those who, in future ages, shall obtain the advantage of ocular proof, notwithstanding become true and faithful believers.

St. John, as I have observed in another part, throughout the whole of his Gospel dwells particularly on the doctrine of the Master's divinity; well knowing the necessity of a true faith: since, without it, no one, whatever his outward conduct or appearance may be, can be considered as a true Christian, or entitled to those glorious rewards it holds out to true believers. This doctrine, which

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constantly taught his disciples during his life-time, he again expressly inculcates after his resurrection ; as we may find in the sixteenth chapter of St. Mark, ver. 16. —(“ He that believeth, and is baptized, “ shall be saved ; but he that believeth “ not, shall be damned.”)

Grant us, therefore, most merciful God, such a true, steady and proper faith in thy only beloved Son, as may shew itself in all our thoughts, words and actions, and be accepted in thy sight and eternally rewarded in the mansions of bliss ; where that faith will be succeeded by the complete enjoyment of what the faithful have constantly looked forward to in this life. This and every other blessing, we humbly but earnestly solicit at the throne of grace, through the merits and sufferings of our only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER

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 ple in his life-time, he again exp-
 after his resurrection; as
 the sixteenth chapter of 1.
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 Amen.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THREE

ST. JOHN, CHAP. XXI.

" 1. **A**FTER these things Jesu
 " himself again to the dis-
 " the sea of Tiberias; and on 1
 " shewed he himself:

" 2. There were together Simo
 " and Thomas called Didymus,
 " thanael of Cana in Galilee, and
 " of Zebedee, and two other of
 " ciples.

" 3. Simon-Peter saith unto the
 " a fishing. They say unto him,
 " go with thee. They went for
 " entered into a ship immediate
 " that night they caught nothing."

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After the death of their Master, the disciples returned, for a short time, to their former occupations : pride, or sloth, would have ill become the servants of him who was all humility and meekness, and whose whole life had been passed in rendering service to the bodies, as well as to the souls of his offending creatures. St. Paul, also, pursued the same course, employing his leisure hours in providing for his own maintenance : this he did, not only as an example of industry, but to prevent any murmuring amongst his followers, at being obliged to support him ; which might have proved prejudicial to the gospel of Christ, and some bar to the propagation of it. I shall select one or two passages, in which he expresses himself fully on this subject, (Acts, chap. xx. ver. 33. 34. :) “ I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me ;” and, again, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, (chap. ii. ver.

After the death of the disciples returned, for a time, to their former occupations: but they have ill become the servants of all humility and meekness, whose whole life had been in service to the bodies, as he of his offending creatures pursued the same course, his leisure hours in providing maintenance: this he is an example of industry, and any murmuring amongst his being obliged to support might have proved prejudicial to the gospel of Christ, and some bar to the propagation of it. I shall select passages, in which he expounds fully on this subject, (Acts 13. 34. :) "I have covered my nakedness, or gold, or apparel: neither have I lacked any thing, but have suffered unto my necessities, and have done all these things for your sake, that ye might have an example, and that ye might have peace, and that ye might have the word of the Lord to flourish, and that ye might have the word of the Lord to flourish, and that ye might have the word of the Lord to flourish."

ver. 9. :) "For ye remember, I have laboured, and travelled. For I have been night and day, because we would be chargeable unto any of you, we have committed unto you the gospel of God. And ye know that ye have been directed by an angel, to repair to Galilee, where they should behold their beloved Master: (Luke 24. 7.) "I will go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead: And he will goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. Thither, therefore, they went; and during the time they waited in expecting their Lord's appearance, they endeavoured to provide themselves with the necessities of life. Their time became too late after they had received from him the full commission, to be spent in any other employ than that of the propagation of the gospel.

"4. But when the morning came, Jesus stood on the shore: and he said unto them, Come hither, and I will give you bread, and flesh, and fish, and all manner of food, that ye may eat and be satisfied."

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“ disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

“ 5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

“ 6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

“ 7. Therefore that disciple, whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon-Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea.

“ 8. And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes.

“ 9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

“ 10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

“ 11. Simon-Peter went up, and drew
“ the

" disciples knew not that

" 5. Then Jesus saith unto
" them, have ye any answer?
" answered him, No.

" 6. And he said unto them,
" net on the right side of the ship

" shall find. They caught
" now they were not able to

" the multitude of fishes.
" 7. Therefore that day

" Jesus loved, saith unto them,
" Lord. Now when Simon
" that it was the Lord, he put
" coat unto him, (for he was
" did cast himself into the sea.

" 8. And the other disciples
" little ship (for they were not
" land, but as it were two hundred
" dragging the net with fishes.

" 9. As soon then as they were
" land, they saw a fire of coals
" fish laid thereon, and bread

" 10. Jesus saith unto them,
" the fishes which ye have now caught

" 11. Simon-Peter went up upon the

" the net to land, full of great fishes:
" hundred and fifty and three: and
" there were so many, yet was the net
" broken.

" 12. Jesus saith unto them, Come
" dine. And none of the disciples
" ask him, Who art thou? knowing
" was the Lord.

" 13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh
" bread, and giveth them, and saith
" wife.

" 14. This is now the third time
" Jesus shewed himself to his disciples
" after that he was risen from the dead.

The ill success of the disciples for
long a time, made the miraculous
of fishes which they took upon the
of Jesus appear the more striking, and
diately convinced St. John that the
who had been conversing with them
be no other than the Lord himself.
was confirmed when they came to land.

It is most probable that he himself
with them at this time, to convince

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of the reality of his human presence amongst them, and to confirm the truth of the resurrection of his body ; since, we are told in the Acts of the apostles, (ch. x. v. 41.) He did eat and drink with them after he rose from the dead. St. Luke, also, relates, (chap. xxiv. ver. 42. 43. :)
“ And they gave him a piece of a broiled
“ fish, and of an honeycomb. And he
“ took it, and did eat before them.” This
appears to have been the night after his
resurrection.

“ 15. So when they had dined, Jesus
“ saith to Simon-Peter, Simon son of Jonas,
“ lovest thou me more than these ? He
“ saith unto him, Yea, Lord : thou know-
“ est that I love thee. He saith unto him,
“ Feed my lambs.

“ 16. He saith to him again the second
“ time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou
“ me ? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord :
“ thou knowest that I love thee. He saith
“ unto him, Feed my sheep.

“ 17. He saith unto him the third time,
“ Simon

of the reality of his resurrection, and to us of the resurrection of his. are told in the Acts of the

v. 41.) He did eat and drink

after he rose from the dead, also, relates, (chap. xiii.)

"And they gave him a piece

"fish, and of an honeycomb

"took it, and did eat before

appears to have been the

resurrection.

"15. So when they laid

faith to Simon-Peter, Simon

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Feed my lambs.

"16. He saith to him again

me, Simon son of Jonas, lo-

est? He saith unto him, Yea,

u knowest that I love thee.

him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the

"Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou

"Peter was grieved, because he

"him the third time, Lovest thou

"And he said unto him, Lord,

"knowest all things: thou knowest

"I love thee. Jesus saith unto him

"my sheep.

"18. Verily, verily, I say unto

"When thou wast young, thou

"thyself, and walkedst whilst

"wouldest: but when thou shalt

"thou shalt stretch forth thy hand

"another shall gird thee, and thou

"whither thou wouldest not.

"19. This spake he, signifying

"what death he should glorify God

"when he had spoken this, he said

"him, Follow me."

St. Peter, who, in every respect

in the instance of the denial of his

a fault from which he instantly re-

and which he redeemed by the force

his repentance,) had been, and

perfectly steady in his love and

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towards his Master, was grieved to be so repeatedly questioned by him If he loved him; as it seemed to imply a doubt of it. He therefore, after twice assuring him of his love, upon being asked the third time, refers to that intimate knowledge of the human heart which his Lord possessed, and from which no secrets could be hid, to judge of the extent of it. It is certain, that our merciful Lord and Saviour never grieves the hearts of his faithful servants but for their good; and whether he meant by these repeated questions to bring to Peter's mind the recollection of his former fault, for the purpose of guarding him against presumption and shewing him the necessity of an entire reliance on God's assistance upon every occasion, or whether it was to mark more clearly the importance of the charge he was investing him with, in the care of his church, is a point of no consequence: probably they might be asked with a view to both. The mode by which he was to prove his attachment, (and which will equally apply to us all
in

in our respective stations,) was not merely by barren professions, but by zeal and activity in the cause of his Master, and unceasing attention to his brethren committed to his charge. How well he fulfilled these duties, and the success by which his faithful and obedient conduct was rewarded, we may learn in the second chapter of the Acts of the apostles, (ver 41.) where we shall find that, on his first preaching, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, he converted a numerous multitude to the gospel:—("Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.")

Our Lord, in the eighteenth verse above recorded, foretels to St. Peter the particular death which awaited him, and by which he should glorify God. The expression that 'another should carry him whither he would not,' does not mean that he should not be a true martyr: it only points out that human nature, as such, will shrink back at the prospect of
great

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great sufferings ; though the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak. Nay, our blessed Lord himself prayed That if it were possible, (that is, if it could be consistently with the office he had undertaken of man's redemption,) he might escape the sufferings which awaited him. The sincere and faithful servants of God, however resolute in their determination to perform their duty, may, at the hour of suffering, wish for deliverance from torture ; but if they support their sufferings, rather than dishonor him or give up their interest in him, the natural weakness and imperfection of their nature will not be imputed to them as guilt, but they will surely receive a glorious reward from their heavenly Father.

“ 20. Then Peter turning about, seeth
“ the disciple whom Jesus loved, following;
“ (which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that
“ betrayeth thee?)

“ 21. Peter

great sufferings; though willing, the flesh is weak. Lord himself prayed. Tenable, (that is, if it consisted with the office he held in man's redemption,) he underwent sufferings which awaited his faithful servants of Calvary, resolute in their determination of their duty, may, at the hour of death, with confidence, say, *they support their sufferings, dishonor him or give up their lives, the natural weakness and infirmity of their nature will not be to them as guilt, but they will receive a glorious reward from their heavenly Father.*

"20. Then Peter turning to the disciple whom Jesus loved said, (which also leaned on his breast,) *Lord, which of us shall betray thee?*"

"21. Peter seeing him, saith, Lord, and what shall this man do?"

"22. Jesus saith unto him, I say unto thee, that he tarry till I come, what wilt thou do for me? Follow thou me."

"23. Then went this saying among the brethren, that that man should not die: yet Jesus said unto him, He shall not die: but, I say unto thee, that he tarry till I come, what wilt thou do for me?"

"24. This is the disciple who testified of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true."

"25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which should be written every one, I know that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

St. Peter's inquiries as to what would happen to St. John, (who was, even the disciple here meant,) seem

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proceeded from a jealous curiosity ; which our blessed Lord did not think proper to gratify. On the contrary, he checks him for it ; reminding him how much more necessary it was for him to attend to his own duty, than to interfere in the concerns of others. From our Lord's answer, the disciples conceived the erroneous idea that St. John was to continue in the world till Christ should come to judge it. This notion seems to have been founded upon the particular affection which Jesus bore to John. Whether John himself, at the time, understood his Master in that sense, we are not told ; but, it is plain, this was not his belief when he wrote his gospel ; since he takes particular pains to confute the supposition. And although there can be no doubt that he submitted cheerfully to long life, since it was his Lord's will, and conducive to the good of his followers, yet he would not, probably, have considered it as a proof of his superior affection for him that he should so long deprive him of that happiness which
awaited

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our blessed Lord did not
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and conducive to the good of
; yet he would not, prob-
ably considered it as a proof of
affection for him that he should
give him of that happiness

awaited all his faithful servants,
peculiar manner his apostles who
suffered so much for him. St. I-
gnatius on a similar subject may
in his epistle to the Philippians
ver. 23. 24. : "For I am in a strait
"two, having a desire to depart
"be with Christ; which is far
"nevertheless, to abide in the flesh
"needful for you." I cannot
the above passage without remark
it is one of the numberless texts
seem to prove that the soul takes
into other regions, as soon as it
from the body. The meaning of
Lord's reply to St. Peter appear-
ly clear as it is, when consid-
ered as a check to idle curiosity; be-
cause he says to him, If it were my will
should not die at all, but con-
tinue on earth till my second coming, w-
ould you do with it? let your atten-
tion be turned to what concerns yourself
it does not necessarily follow that

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his will. But our blessed Lord might have meant that St. John should live (as he actually did) to see the destruction of Jerusalem ; when the Jews were deservedly punished for their enormous wickedness not only in crucifying him, but for their afterwards rejecting his offered grace and their refusing to acknowledge him as the true messiah, although the whole of the prophecies so clearly pointed him out in that character, that their incredulity could only arise from pride and obstinacy, which blinded them to the true interpretation of the prophecies and placed them in a situation as dangerous as if they had disbelieved them altogether.

Newton, in his excellent treatise on the prophecies, observes That those who wished to confute them, pretended that they were written after the occurrences had happened. In that most valuable work he has fully and clearly confuted such sceptics ; and, in his second vol. page 204, he remarks That St. John is the only evangelist who lived and wrote after the destruction

his will. But our blessed Lord meant that St. John (who actually did) to see the destruction of Jerusalem; when the Jews were punished for their enormities only in crucifying him, by rejecting his offers; refusing to acknowledge him as Messiah, although the writings and prophecies so clearly pointed to his character, that their incredulity arose from pride and obstinacy, which blinded them to the true interpretation of the prophecies and placed their situation as dangerous as if they had never believed them altogether.

Newton, in his excellent remarks upon the prophecies, observes That those who pretend to confute them, pretend to be written after the occurrence. In that most valuable work was fully and clearly corrected; and, in his second volume, he remarks That St. John is the last who lived and wrote of

the destruction of Jerusalem: and positively omits those prophecies, to which this very cavil, as we may suppose, is a reason. This account of St. John living till after the destruction of Jerusalem seems to add strength to that which our Lord, in his reply to the Jews, alluded to that period. The account which the disciples fell, upon this should prove a warning to those who presume to give a decided explanation of such prophecies as are not yet fulfilled. The author I have just alluded to, in his remarks upon the prophecies concerning the revelations of St. John, (vol. 2.) quotes a passage from Sir Isaac Newton, very applicable to the subject upon.

“ The folly of interpreters has
 “ Sir Isaac Newton observes,)
 “ times and things by this proph-
 “ God designed to make them
 “ By this rashness they have not
 “ exposed themselves, but brought
 “ prophecies also into contempt.”

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The design of God was much otherwise: he gave this, as well as the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to fore-know things, but that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the events, and his own providence (not the interpreters) be then manifested thereby to the world.

We are not to suppose, because St. John is here and in other parts styled 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' that he did not therefore love the rest of his disciples: the whole of his conduct proved that he had a great love and affection for them all; with the exception of the traitor, who despised and rejected the blessing. It seems most probable that St. John's gentleness, humility, and sweetness of disposition, joined to his great piety at so early an age (he being the youngest of all the apostles,) gained him those distinguishing marks of affection which he received from his Master.

St. John gives us to understand That we are not to suppose all the acts done by
our

our Saviour, and the instructions he gave, are recorded either by him or by the other evangelists; and (speaking figuratively) observes that, had that been the case, the world itself could not have contained the books that must have been written. There is no doubt but every action of our Lord, and every conversation he held, was worthy of being recorded; but since, then, the bulk of mankind, either from inability to procure them, from ignorance to understand, or from want of leisure to attend, must have been deprived of the benefit of them, how thankful ought we to be to God that the Gospels were so written as to contain every thing necessary for us to know, for the great end of salvation, in so small a compass that the poorest may procure them, and in language so plain that the most unlearned may understand them! Nor (blessed be God!) are even those left in ignorance who have the misfortune to be unable to read; except, indeed, through their own fault: means are provided for the instruction of all who are desirous of receiving

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receiving it, by a due attendance to their duty at church on the Lord's day.

Although St. John concludes his gospel with the instructions delivered to his disciples by our Saviour after his resurrection, making no mention of his ascension into Heaven, yet (I trust) I shall stand excused to my readers for detaining them with a few observations on an event which gives so glorious a completion to the mission of our blessed Lord, and on the prophecy of the angels respecting his second coming. Acts i. ver. 9. 10. 11.:
“ And when he had spoken these things,
“ while they beheld, he was taken up; and
“ a cloud received him out of their sight.
“ And while they looked stedfastly toward
“ Heaven, as he went up, behold, two
“ men stood by them in white apparel;
“ which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why
“ stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this
“ same Jesus, which is taken up from you
“ into Heaven, shall so come in like man-
“ ner as ye have seen him go into Hea-
“ ven.” Psalm lxviii. ver 18. contains a
prophecy

prophecy on this subject: "Thou hast
 " ascended on high, thou hast led cap-
 " tivity captive: thou hast received
 " gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious
 " also, that the Lord God might dwell
 " among them." God the Father gave all
 power to Christ Jesus: every good gift
 therefore which we receive is in and thro'
 him; and he freely bestows them, not on
 his friends only, but also upon his very
 enemies, to encourage them to turn to
 him and be saved.

St. Luke (chap. xxiv. ver. 44. and to
 the end) gives the following relation of
 it. "And he said unto them, These are
 " the words which I spake unto you, while
 " I was yet with you, that all things must
 " be fulfilled which were written in the
 " law of Moses, and in the prophets, and
 " in the psalms, concerning me. Then
 " opened he their understanding, that they
 " might understand the Scriptures, and
 " said unto them, Thus it is written, and
 " thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to
 " rise from the dead the third day: and
 " that

“ that repentance and remission of sins
 “ should be preached in his name among
 “ all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And
 “ ye are witnesses of these things. And
 “ behold, I send the promise of my Father
 “ upon you : but tarry ye in the city of
 “ Jerusalem, until ye be endued with pow-
 “ er from on high. And he led them out
 “ as far as to Bethany : and he lifted up
 “ his hands, and blessed them. And it
 “ came to pass, while he blessed them, he
 “ was parted from them, and carried up
 “ into Heaven. And they worshipped
 “ him and returned to Jerusalem with
 “ great joy : and were continually in the
 “ Temple, praising and blessing God.
 “ Amen.”

Here, we learn, that our blessed Lord
 explained in the fullest manner to the
 apostles, all those parts of the holy Scrip-
 ture which related to himself ; shewing
 them how completely they had all been
 fulfilled. He then declares them to be
 his ministers, to preach forgiveness of sins,
 in his name, upon sincere repentance
 and

"that repentance and
 "should be preached in:
 "all nations, beginning at
 "ye are witnesses of the
 "behold, I send the pro:
 "upon you: but tarry
 "Jerusalem, until ye be:
 "er from on high. And
 "as far as to Bethany: and
 "his hands, and blessed
 "came to pass, while he
 "was parted from them, and
 "into Heaven. And he
 "him and returned to Jeru:
 "great joy: and were con:
 "Temple, praising and
 "Amen."

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 explained in the fullest man:
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 ure which related to him:
 rem how completely they be:
 lfilled. He then declares to
 ministers, to preach for Jesus
 his name, upon sincere

and amendment of life; and now
 first time, expressly tells them
 blessing was not to be confined to
 but extended to all nations, be:
 first at Jerusalem. This informa:
 of the more importance, as, whe:
 minated them to their high office
 them on their first mission, he had
 them to preach the gospel to
 sheep of the house of Israel, and n:
 into the way of the Gentiles.—(S
 chap. x. ver. 5. 6.) Their time
 yet come. The preference wa:
 given to the Jews, who were hei:
 promise: yet they cast away fro:
 this jewel of inestimable price,
 the Gentile world to obtain the
 right. Although our blessed Lo:
 enlightened the minds of the apos:
 they might understand the Script:
 he would not suffer them to beg:
 great work till they had publicly:
 the gift of the Holy Ghost; which
 repeats his promise to send them
 rectis them to wait its accomplish

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Jerusalem. Our Lord might intend, by this injunction, to point out to them, in the most forcible manner, that they were to place no reliance upon themselves, or upon their own knowledge, but implicitly to submit themselves to the guidance of God's holy Spirit, which should be sent to their assistance.

The whole of our blessed Saviour's business on earth being now completed, he leads his disciples out to Bethany: (by which we understand the Mount of Olives, a part of which belonged to Bethany.) This spot, which had been particularly distinguished by his frequent instructions to his disciples, by his prayers to his Father, and by his agonizing sufferings previous to his death, he chose as the scene of his glory, and for the manifestation of his divine power; and there, having given to his disciples his farewell blessing, in the view of them all, he ascended to Heaven. The disciples, who till this time seem not to have perfectly understood the dignity of their Master, are now, from the circumstance of his

Jerusalem. Our Lord, in this injunction, to point out the most forcible manner to place no reliance upon their own knowledge, to submit themselves to God's holy Spirit, which is their assistance.

The whole of our blessed Saviour's fineness on earth being now over, leads his disciples out of the place which we understand the place to be a part of which belonged to him. This spot, which had been distinguished by his frequent presence to his disciples, by his presence, and by his agonizing presence previous to his death, he chose as the place of his glory, and for the manifestation of his divine power; and there, having blessed his disciples his farewell blessing to them all, he ascended to Heaven. His disciples, who till this time scarcely understood the dignity of his person, are now, from the circumstance

his ascension before their eyes, that of his resurrection, fully convinced that he is the eternal Son of God, their faith being now exalted to a higher pitch, they offer to him that which, till then, they had only paid to the Father. Afterwards, in compliance with the directions he had left to them, they return to Jerusalem, blessing and praising God, there to wait the further manifestation of his power from the heaven to which he was ascended.

As Christ ascended, so he will descend, from the clouds of Heaven; then will his holy angels attend him, and all the saints will be summoned to appear before him, when the trumpet shall sound, and they will all arise. The pomp and grandeur and terror of that day, will infinitely exceed whatever we can now form. The Scripture abounds with testimony on this subject; of which I shall select a few (St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. iv. ver. 16. 17. :) "For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven

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" a shout, with the voice of the archangel,
 " and with the trump of God: and the
 " dead in Christ shall rise first: then we
 " which are alive, and remain, shall be
 " caught up together with them in the
 " clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and
 " so shall we ever be with the Lord." II.

Thessalonians, chap. i. ver. 7. & 9. 12.

" And to you who are troubled, rest with
 " us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed
 " from Heaven, with his mighty angels,
 " in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them
 " that know not God, and that obey not
 " the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 " who shall be punished with everlasting
 " destruction from the presence of the
 " Lord, and from the glory of his power:
 " when he shall come to be glorified in
 " his saints, and to be admired in all them
 " that believe (because our testimony among
 " you was believed) in that day." II.

Epist. St. Peter, chap. iii. ver. 10. 11. 12.

" But the day of the Lord will come as a
 " thief in the night: in the which the
 " heavens shall pass away with a great
 " noise,

" a shout, with the voice
 " and with the trumpet
 " dead in Christ shall rise
 " which are alive, and
 " caught up together
 " clouds, to meet the Lord
 " so shall we ever be with
 Thessalonians, chap. i. ver.
 " And to you who are true
 " us, when the Lord Jesus
 " from Heaven, with his
 " in flaming fire, taking
 " that know not God, and
 " the gospel of our Lord
 " who shall be punished
 " destruction from the
 " Lord, and from the glory
 " when he shall come to be
 " his saints, and to be
 " hat believe (because our
 " ou was believed) in that
 St. Peter, chap. iii. ver. 10.
 " at the day of the Lord
 " f in the night; in the
 " ens shall pass away
 "

" noise, and the elements shall
 " fervent heat, the earth also and
 " that are therein shall be
 " Seeing then that all these things
 " dissolved, what manner of persons
 " ye to be in all holy conversation
 " godliness, looking for and
 " the coming of the day of God, when
 " heavens being on fire shall be
 " and the elements shall melt with
 " heat?" How tremendous is
 count! Let us not, then, read
 similar texts upon this subject
 ference, as if there could be a
 of their truth, or that they did
 cern us: every human being is
 terested in them; for we must
 the summons to the judgment
 Christ; none can escape, though
 should call on the hills and mountains
 cover them; neither can they
 the presence of their Judge. Let
 fore, prepare for that most awful
 we may not be disowned by the
 and Judge of mankind. The
 cou

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couragement to repentance is held out, even to the worst of finners. Let us then reflect whither a wicked course of life will inevitably consign us. Will it not hurry us to everlasting destruction? No one, acquainted with the Scriptures, can have a doubt on this head. Shall we, then, hesitate to accept the gracious invitation to amend our lives, and, by so doing, to become partakers of everlasting happiness through the merits and sufferings of the Son of God? (Acts, chap. iii. ver. 19.) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." How encouraging is this to the sinner to forsake his crooked ways! that his sins shall not only be forgiven, but shall be blotted out, so that not a trace of them shall remain upon record against him. Our gracious God has, in mercy, ordained that every sin truly repented of should be totally blotted out; since, such is the frailty of human nature, that were all the sins and follies of the best amongst us, nay, of the very saints themselves, to remain on record

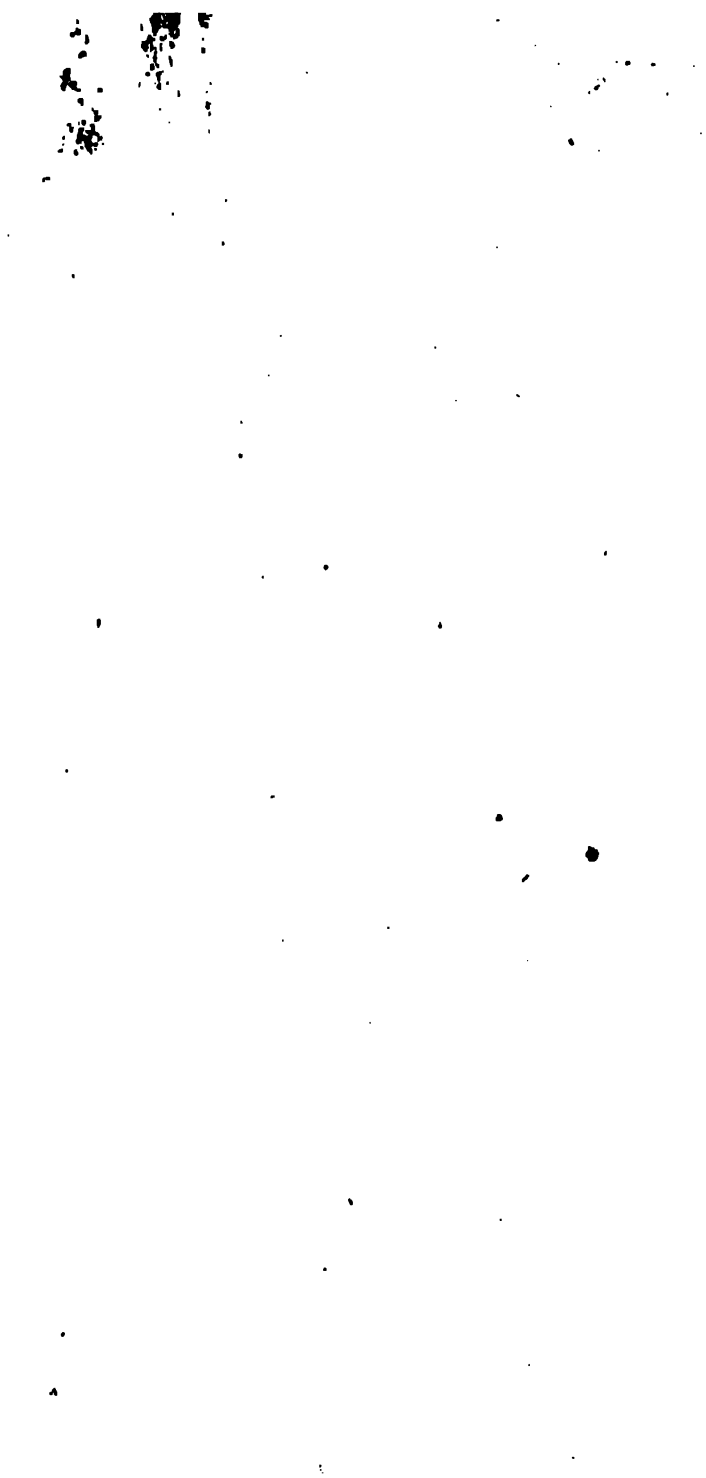
record and to be exposed to notice, it must cast a damp upon that glorious day which he has decreed shall be a day of jubilee and complete triumph to the righteous.

Having taken St. John's gospel for the subject of my observations, I think I cannot more properly conclude them, than in the words of that excellent collect provided by our church for that evangelist's day.

“ Merciful Lord, we beseech thee to
“ cast thy bright beams of light upon thy
“ church, that it being enlightened by the
“ doctrine of thy blessed apostle and evan-
“ gelist St. John, may so walk in the light
“ of thy truth, that it may at length attain
“ to the light of everlasting life, through
“ Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

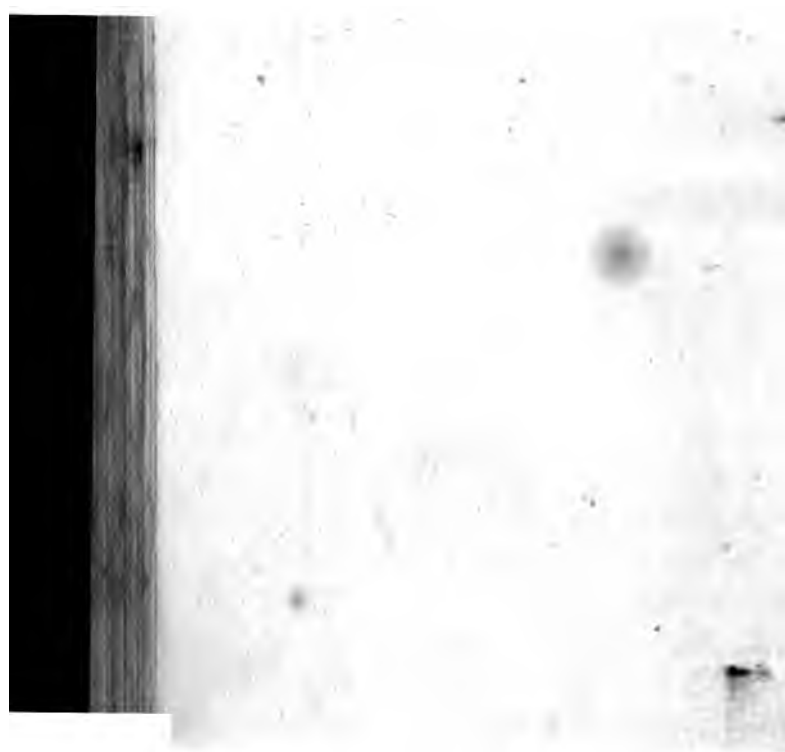
THE END.











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